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REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Progress at the national, regional and international levels in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The Economic and Social Council, by its resolution 1988/22, established a comprehensive reporting system for the five-yearly review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, the first of which will take place in 1990. The Council requested a report of the Secretary-General on the review and appraisal based on national reports as well as other information. The review and appraisal presented in this report indicates that there has been progress in some areas since the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held at Nairobi in 1985, especially in the area of de jure equality, but that for a number of reasons, progress in achieving de facto equality, that is, the full integration of women in development or full participation of women in peace has slowed or stopped. The report notes the long-term effects on women of demographic and social factors as well as the consequences of the economic conditions of the late 1980s. It notes national action taken in terms of the Forward-looking Strategies. It points out that a number of steps have been taken by the United Nations system to improve its ability to assist national action in implementing the Strategies.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. More than four years after the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 1/ with one third of the time allocated for achieving the goal of equality between women and men elapsed, the principal obstacles to the implementation of the Strategies have become clearer. Despite advances in some areas, the general pattern is one of a loss of dynamism. There is concern that, unless implementation is greatly improved, many of the objectives will not be achieved by the year 2000.

2. The review and appraisal should be based primarily on national reports. By 1 September 1989, only 55 had been received, which may well be an indicator of the difficulties encountered both in implementing the Strategies and in reporting on their implementation.

3. This report is based on statistics and indicators compiled by the Statistical Office of the United Nations, and information from the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the regional commissions and non-governmental organizations. In addition, the analyses of the priority themes before the Commission on the Status of Women in 1988, 1989 and 1990,* and for the 1989 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2/ were used. These included detailed analyses by expert groups and seminars, as well as data from the national level. They thus draw on the experience gained in all regions and many countries.

4. While progress in the diversity of subjects covered by the Forward-looking Strategies cannot be measured exactly, the reports and statistics show changes that occurred during the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1976-1985), which information was not available at the Nairobi World Conference. National reports also reflect changes that have occurred since 1985. These various sources reveal the obstacles to be overcome and the need to design concrete measures to revitalize progress.

5. In each of the three objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies: equality, development and peace, there are areas in which positive developments have been made and areas in which little progress can be observed. At the national level, the institutional basis for the advancement of women remains weak due to insufficient authority, expertise and resources. At the international level, improvements made in planning and co-ordination are partially offset by the lack of sufficient resources to ensure implementation.

6. Some countries have advanced further than others, often starting from a stronger base; in others the conditions under which the advancement of women takes place have made progress slow. The applicability of specific provisions

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*National machinery for the advancement of women; problems of rural women; violence against women in the family and in society and education for peace; 1989: Equality in social and economic participation; education, including eradication of illiteracy, employment, health and other social services including child care and population aspects; full participation of women in the construction of their countries and in the achievement of a just political and economic system; 1990: Equality in political participation and decision-making; negative effects of the world economic situation on the improvement of the status of women; women in situations of armed conflict.

of the Strategies in a given country may vary, as many countries have reported. However, there are common factors that can be identified for all countries, concerning both obstacles and measures to be taken.

A. Equality

7. In the field of formal legislation, there has been considerable progress in achieving equality. By 1 September 1989, 99 countries had become States party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. An additional 18 Member States had signed the Convention, but not ratified it. Most national reports, as well as the reports of States parties to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) show that national laws are being adjusted to the provisions of the Convention.

8. There is, however, evidence that the elimination of de jure discrimination has not been matched by reductions in de facto discrimination. Inequality still exists in access to education, to productive assets and to decision-making, and in conditions of work and remuneration.

9. In most countries women do not seem to be aware of their rights under the Convention, and in many countries, they lack the skills and knowledge to use the legal system to pursue their rights. The lack of what has been termed "legal literacy" constitutes an obstacle to the implementation of the equality objective of the Strategies. Another important obstacle, according to many countries, is the reinforcement of women's lesser status by images in the mass media and advertising, and in the cultural values being transmitted by other means. Many of the obstacles, particularly those of an educational nature, are manifested at the local level in the daily lives of women and men, and can only be removed by policies and programmes at the grass-roots level.

10. As regards equality in economic and social participation, the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-third session states that: "Where progress has been achieved, it has not been through natural evolutionary processes. It is becoming clear that special efforts are needed to remove the obstacles, both legal and practical, to women's equal participation." (E/CN.6/1989/5, p. 4) While a number of countries report policies of affirmative action to overcome, in a short period of time, the effects of past inequality, these policies are still not common and continue to face opposition. They also suffer from the lack of appropriate enforcement machinery. The preference of many countries is to seek long-term achievement of equality by such policies as equal access to education. Such measures may have an effect on young women some time in the twenty-first century, but will not improve the status of women today.

11. This situation is also reflected in women's equality in political participation and decision making. Despite the fact that most countries now use democratic methods of choosing political leaders and making policy choices, and that women make up half of the electorates, relatively few women reach the highest levels of political participation and even fewer become public decision makers. On average, women represent only 10 per cent of members of parliament, and only 3.5 per cent of ministerial-level decision makers. In all forums where policy decisions are proposed and made, but especially those dealing with decisions affecting women's daily lives, at national, international and local levels, women are largely absent. As a result, as was stated in the report of the Expert Group Meeting on Equality in Political Participation and Decision-making, Vienna, 18-22 September 1989: "... women in all countries share a common condition: they are not full participants in the

public choices that affect their lives. This must change." (EGM/EPPDM/1989/1, p. 4)

12. Although the factors underlying this situation vary according to the traditions of the country concerned, regardless of region or level of development, a major cause is the absence of women in the leadership of political parties and other organizations, and their consequent absence as candidates for public office. This is coupled with almost invisible barriers to promotion to the highest ranks in the civil service, where women make up a sizeable proportion of the total labour force. Not well-studied at the national level, it is illustrated by the case of women in the international civil service. The few exceptions seem to be in countries where either policies of affirmative action to ensure representation in leadership have been adopted, or where women exercise a "gender interest" in selecting their political leaders and thus help to provide the necessary political will for policies to improve women's status.

B. Development

13. The general progress of world development over the past five years has been limited, at best. For women this means that the conditions of employment, education and health that were meant to be addressed in the implementation of the Strategies continue largely unchanged. For the average woman today - poor, lacking equal opportunities for education, subject to work for a lesser remuneration than men or for no remuneration, often unable to control her own fertility, increasingly more often the head of the family - development has been an illusion. As it was stated in the 1989 World Survey:

> "despite economic progress measured in growth rates, at least for the majority of developing countries, economic progress for women has virtually stopped, social progress has slowed, social well-being in many cases has deteriorated and, because of the importance of women's social and economic role, the aspirations for them in current development strategies will not be met." 3/

14. When measured against 1970 figures, there is evidence that programmes to improve women's access to education have had an effect in many regions, especially for younger women. Equality between women and men in school enrolment has been achieved in several regions, although not in those in which the majority of the world's population is found. In most regions, health services have improved, and infant and maternal mortality have decreased. There is clearly a greater recognition of women's economic role at both national and international levels.

15. At the same time, the differences between women and men in terms of such critical factors as literacy, income and access to services, which were noted in the Strategies, have persisted. Despite a long-term trend suggesting some improvement, this has slowed during the past five years. The economic difficulties faced by most countries in the 1980s due to international economic conditions relating to trade, external debt and general conditions of recession in all countries, but especially by the developing countries, have meant an increase in women's participation in the economy as women have sought to cope with the effects of declining incomes in real terms. This is often not reflected in the official statistics since it occurs in the unregulated and unreported informal sector. In developed countries, despite renewed growth, the proportion of women among the poor has increased. In developing countries, where most women are already poor, it has meant that promised improvements have not occurred.

16. The International Seminar on Women and Rural Development, held at Vienna in 1989, concluded:

> "The situation of rural women has been affected by the negative effects of overall development trends and the national and inter national levels. These trends, given the conditions of discrimination which are common in the rural areas of many countries, have constituted severe obstacles to the advancement of rural women. They have normally had limited access to the factors of production, particularly land and capital, to technology and to training. This is particularly unfortunate in view of the role that women could perform in a strategy of development that focuses on efficiency as well as equity. As a result of their position as food providers and producers, promoting rural women's agricultural activities would have automatic spin-off effects on social development on nutrition, health and rural housing." (IS/WRD/1989/1)

17. The situation bodes ill. The contrast between the improved access of young women to education and therefore, in principle, their qualifications for better employment and the jobs actually available will constitute a long-term problem unless employment is generated. For adult women, it means an increase in the already heavy double burden of home and remunerated or non-remunerated work. There is, moreover, evidence in the developing countries most affected by external debt and consequent structural adjustment of a slowing in the rate of improvement even in access to education. Lack of improvement in the conditions of rural women is beginning to have an effect on the environment, and will have long-term consequences.

18. A major factor is the reduced availability of public resources. Being among the newest and therefore most vulnerable programmes of Governments, those devoted to women seem to have been among the most affected by cost cutting.

19. At the same time, new needs for social support to women are becoming evident in all societies. This is because of such diverse factors as women's need for remunerated employment, the decline of the extended family as a social support institution, and the increase in the numbers of both the young and the aging in the populations of developing countries. Other factors are the increasing incidence of female-headed households and increasing internal and international migration. There is little evidence of an increase in the sharing of domestic and parental responsibilities between women and men that would provide an alternative means of social support. It is clear that few Governments have been able to provide adequate support and that successful experiences are few and poorly documented.

20. As the Secretary-General in his report on the development priority theme in 1989 stated:

> "Any attempt to deal with the problem must involve all components of social support, starting with the family itself, but including the services that are provided for the public good: education and training, health, and family planning. Efforts must also be made to improve conditions in the work-place. The interrelation among the various services and issues needs to be emphasized. Improvements in any of the support services will have a positive effect on the others." (E/CN.6/1989/6, para. 8)

21. The challenge of development is how to provide adequate economic opportunities to women. It is particularly necessary to open their access to technology and the training needed to use it. It is also necessary to ensure the social support needed by women to perform their essential economic activities.

22. As stated in the report of the United Nations Interregional Seminar on Women and the Economic Crisis held at Vienna, from 3 to 7 October 1988: "The economic crisis, while having a negative impact on women in many respects, could provide an opportunity - indeed force a rethinking of approaches to development. Both solving the negative consequences for women and improving the well-being of men and women can be achieved if the full potential of women to contribute to the development process can be encouraged by the policies adopted by governments. ... it therefore requires a perspective directed towards the future, the year 2000 and beyond." The seminar also recommended that the participation of women in development should be part of the next international development strategy.

C. Peace

23. Recent years have seen an improvement in global perspectives for peace, as a number of long-standing conflicts have begun to be resolved. Any decrease in conflict benefits women, as any other group in the population. But despite this progress, a large part of the world's women are still subject to the effects of regional conflicts and most of the conflicts to which the Strategies refer are largely unresolved. For example, the progress made in resolving the problems of women in Namibia have yet to be matched by similar improvements in the situation of women in Palestine or living under apartheid in South Africa.

24. There is also the growing recognition of the pervasiveness of violence against women in the family and in society in all countries, regardless of the level of development, and of the need to do something about it. The phenomenon has begun to be documented since the Nairobi World Conference. As the Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family, with Special Emphasis on Women convened in December 1986 concluded:

> "The problem is complex and requires careful solutions. At base, the real answers lie within the greater notion of the inherent equality between women and men, and how each society respects that basic equality and ensures and enhances it in all its most fundamental aspects. ... it is essential to provide immediate protection and assistance to women who are physically, emotionally, sexually, economically, or otherwise abused. Such protection must be co-ordinated and multi-faceted, including legal, health, social service support, and community support. ... [Efforts should] encompass solutions which are short-term and long-term, and which require regional, national and international action." 4/

25. The review and appraisal, however, shows that the recognition of the problem of violence against women has not been followed by action in many countries, and that violence is a growing problem in the context of the economic, political and social changes affecting societies.

26. It is significant that, although women have been disproportionately the victims of violence, whether international, national or domestic, they have seldom been involved in the decision-making on combating it. That situation has not changed substantially since 1985.

27. While the hypothesis that women, because of their experiences, would be less likely to choose conflict than co-operation cannot be tested empirically in the absence of female decision makers, it is a reasonable one based on women's action in other official spheres and in non-governmental organizations. The peace process has also benefited from the work of women outside Government who have worked towards solutions to conflicts. Whether, when these conflicts are resolved, women will be given the recognition and continuing presence in the processes that their contribution merits remains to be seen.

D. Areas of special concern

28. Many countries have expressed their concern for those women who, because of their situation, are particularly vulnerable to adverse economic and social conditions. Beyond the issue of securing their rights to participate fully in society for special groups of women, such as the elderly, disabled and young, the main issue is one of recognizing and ensuring their contribution to society. The increasing incidence of poverty among women, especially those who become sole heads of household, increases the vulnerability of women. Added to that are women whose situation as refugees or migrants has become worse. For all groups, adequate policies and programmes could enable them to achieve satisfactory conditions. Seen as assets, rather than liabilities, these women could contribute significantly to development.

E. Means of action

29. Implementation of the Strategies was anticipated to require the development of institutions, procedures and the mobilization of resources at both national and international levels. In some respects, institutions have begun to develop and procedures have improved. However, mobilization of resources for the advancement of women has not occurred to the extent desired.

30. Successful implementation during the 1990s will require a stronger commitment by Governments to implement the Strategies, both at national and international levels. Fulfilling this commitment in the context of competing policy demands requires an understanding of both the inseparable relationship of the advancement of women to other issues and of the development of institutions that can present it clearly and convincingly.

31. At the international level, there has been some success in equipping the United Nations system to implement its part of the Strategies. A system-wide medium-term plan for women and development has been agreed for the period 1990-1995 and has already affected programmes in the biennium 1988-1989. The network of focal points set up during the Decade for Women, with the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat acting as its centre, has continued to grow and has resulted in an increasing level of joint activity. Institutional arrangements dealing with women's concerns have been established in most organizations. At the regional level, the commissions have continued their work based on regionally defined priorities. In organizations concerned with operational activities, there have been efforts to ensure that women are taken into account in mainstream development co-operation projects, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has continued to improve its work in a new organizational setting. The gender-based statistics produced by the Statistical Office of the United Nations, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and their partners in the United Nations system should facilitate more serious research at all levels.

32. While the issue of the advancement of women has been more visible at the international level since the Nairobi World Conference, it is proving difficult to maintain. Women are seriously underrepresented at senior management levels in the United Nations system and there is some evidence that the issue is beginning to receive a lower priority in the work of many organizations. Resource levels in real terms for activities related to the advancement of women have not increased, despite the increase in activities at the international level and the increasing requirements of developing countries. Women's programmes have tended to receive the same reductions as other programmes during retrenchment. Much of the work therefore continues to require extra-budgetary funding. Some key activities, such as the updating of the Women's Indicators and Statistics Data Base and the Women's Information System, as well as many activities at the regional level, do not yet have secure funding. Most of the expert groups held on priority themes have been funded from extra-budgetary sources. As a result, at a time in which international programmes have the knowledge and institutional potential to be more active and operational, they may not be able to exercise this potential.

33. At the national level, similar conditions exist in most countries. During the Decade for Women and afterwards, more than two thirds of all countries have established national focal points. Since the Nairobi World Conference this national machinery has continued to receive international attention, and the importance of its role in presenting women's concerns within Government has been underlined at many expert groups and seminars, both regional and inter-regional, as well as by the Commission on the Status of Women. There have been efforts to support networking between units of national machinery.

34. Most units, however, suffer from a lack of staff and resources. Many are located away from the main sources of decision-making. Yet, if mainstreaming (i.e. integration) women's concerns into development plans and projects is not to mean their disappearance in practical terms, the national machinery has an essential role of advocate, monitor and adviser in national decision-making. The Expert Group Meeting on Equality in Political Participation and Decision-making recommended: "National machinery should be strengthened by enabling it to monitor the incorporation of women's concerns in all government ministries, including their budgets, and be provided with adequate resources to carry out their tasks." (EGM/EPPDM/1989/1, p. 5) With a clearly expressed political commitment by government, this should be possible.

35. For this, it is necessary to mobilize information on the status of women in the country and on their comparative position vis-à-vis other countries. This in turn requires both technology and resources, neither of which are available for most national machinery, especially in developing countries. It also may require international assistance, both direct and indirect, through the United Nations system at all levels. As the Seminar on National Machinery for Monitoring and Improving the Status of Women, held at Vienna from 28 September to 2 October 1987 put it: "International assistance from both bilateral and multilateral sources was particularly needed in the area of training, especially in monitoring and evaluation methods, project formulation, and appraisal and information management." (E/CN.6/1988/3, p. 7)

36. Networking, at the national level within Governments and between Governments and non-governmental organizations, has begun to fulfil its expected promise. At the international level, the usefulness of networks among the organizations of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations has been similarly demonstrated. The series of seminars and expert groups undertaken by the United Nations to prepare the priority themes for the Commission on the Status of Women are an example of

how the national experience of women can be brought to bear on the elaboration of international policies. This approach merits further explanation.

37. The need to look towards the future, to the critical last decade of this century has been underscored by the Commission. By identifying the most important obstacles that must be dealt with immediately, it should be possible to suggest priorities to be followed internationally, based on national experience, that would permit optimal use of the scarce resources available.

38. Some efforts have already been made to identify issues of immediate concern, such as those by the Expert Group that met at Vienna in February 1989 to review the final draft of the first regular update of the world survey on the role of women in development. It was stated in the report of that meeting: "Environment, population (including health), housing and refugee women, in addition to continuing concern with major sectors where women's participation is essential such as agriculture and industry. Work on the informal sector should be included and an effort made to analyse the problems of urban development as they affect women. ... greater attention should be given to the relationship of international economic policies to women's economic role ... and to a more detailed examination of the micro-economics of the family or household as the smallest economic unit and to women's roles as managers within it. ... Priority should be given to such problems as family in the development process, poverty, income distribution, quality of life, social support services, especially in economic crisis, and violence against women within the family and society." (p. 16)

INTRODUCTION

39. By resolution 1988/19, the Economic and Social Council decided that the Commission should meet in 1990 in an extended session to review and appraise the implementation of the Strategies. The Council established a detailed system for this exercise in its resolution 1988/22.

40. The system was to be based on national reports that should address the three objectives: equality, development and peace, and the information collected by a method structured according to the Forward-looking Strategies. The role of the national machinery was emphasized in two Council resolutions: by resolution 1987/18, paragraph 3, Member States were invited to co-operate fully in the review and appraisal and to take into account the needs of the United Nations in this regard when developing their national machinery and reporting systems; by resolution 1988/30, paragraph 10, active participation of the national machinery was urged.

41. Since the review and appraisal was to reflect national action reported by Governments, as in the case of the Nairobi World Conference a questionnaire was chosen as the most appropriate instrument for gathering information. The questionnaire developed for the review and appraisal of the Decade for Women, had covered a wide variety of issues. The result was a document of over 100 pages that Governments found difficult to complete and the United Nations system found difficult to process and analyse.

42. This experience prompted the Commission to insist that the next national questionnaire should be simple. Taking into account the great diversity of national situations and the high rate of non-response to the questions in the Decade review, it was decided to use a short set of open-ended questions for each topic, focusing on major policies and measures, their evaluation and future plans. It was also decided to obtain national perceptions of the relative importance of the issues in national priorities and to determine the perceived level of applicability of the Strategies to the national situation. Finally, an executive summary was requested for each response. These summaries will be made available to Commission members. The draft questionnaire was circulated within the United Nations system for comments before it was finalized.

43. On 28 June 1988, the questionnaire was sent with a note verbale to all the countries on the official distribution list (170 countries in June 1988), setting 15 January 1989 as the deadline for the response. A copy was sent to all the national machinery listed in the Directory of National Machinery, 5/ presented to the Commission in 1989 (background paper 2). In order to publicize the exercise and in particular bring it to the attention of non-governmental organizations, an article was published in Women News, No. 23 of August 1988. A reminder note verbale was sent out on 15 December 1988. By 15 January 1989, only eight Member States (5%) had returned the questionnaire. The Commission, at its thirty-third session discussed the low return rate and recommended a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Economic and Social Council as resolution 1989/32. In compliance with this resolution, the Secretariat immediately contacted the national machinery of the countries that had not responded to the questionnaire. The Secretariat was also requested to use the results of the 1989 World Survey and to make available to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session the preliminary results from the review and appraisal.

44. By 31 August 1989, 55 countries or one third of the recipients of the questionnaire, had responded;* of these, 45 Governments complied with the part of the questionnaire requesting detailed substantive information (see table 1). Thus, only one fourth of the respondents provided information for the review and appraisal that could be analysed.**

Table 1. Responses to the questionnaires for the review and appraisal of the Strategies

Group	Number	Returns, including total Part II		Total returns	
		(Number)	(%)	(Number)	(%)
Developing countries	132	28	21	34	26
Developed countries	38	17	45	21	55
Total	170	45		55	
Members of the Commission on the Status of Women	32	20	63	21	66

45. The original plan of work had foreseen that bodies of the United Nations system would analyse different sections of the completed questionnaires. This plan was modified by the interagency meeting that was held following the Commission, when specialized agencies and regional commissions were requested instead to identify measures and obstacles and to suggest draft recommendations. Those received have been included in this report.

46. In addition to the documentation listed in Council resolution 1988/22, the Secretariat drew information from the case studies prepared for and recommendations of seminars and expert groups organized by the Secretariat since 1985. National reports prepared subsequent to 1985 for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women were also used.

Argentina, Austria,* Bangladesh,* Bhutan, Bolivia,* Brazil,* Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic,* Cameroon,* Canada,* China,* Colombia, Costa Rica,* Cuba,* Czechoslovakia,* Denmark,* Dominica,* Egypt,* Finland,* France,* Guinea Bissau, Holy See, Hungary, Iraq,* Italy,* Japan,* Jordan,* Kuwait,* Lesotho,* Mali,* Mauritius,* Mexico,* Mongolia, Morocco,* Nepal,* New Zealand,* Niger,* Norway,* Oman, Pakistan,* Paraguay,* Peru,* Philippines,* Poland,* Portugal,* Republic of Korea,* Saint Lucia, Spain,* Sri Lanka,* Sweden,* Switzerland, Turkey,* Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom, Venezuela,* Yugoslavia* (*indicates inclusion of Part II).

**Reports received too late to be included in the analyses for this report: Australia, Ethiopia, Gabon, Greece, Mozambique.

47. A parallel survey was conducted on non-governmental organizations as requested in Council resolution 1988/22. A letter dated 10 October 1988 was sent by the Division for the Advancement of Women to the 822 non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Council, together with a copy of the questionnaire. By June 1989, reports had been received from 39 organizations,* of which 17 dealt with substantive issues. Only 12 organizations completed the questionnaire. The contributions from non-governmental organizations have been inserted in the current text.

48. More developed countries (55%) than developing countries returned either part I or part II of the questionnaire.** The rate for African countries was particularly low (10%).

49. There is no clear explanation for the low rate of return. While one explanation might be the questionnaire itself, the high quality of information provided by some countries with very different levels of development indicates that it was possible to provide the information requested.

50. The rate of return is much lower than for the review of the Decade carried out for the Nairobi World Conference. Even though that questionnaire was more difficult, over 120 were completed. For the 1985 review and appraisal, Governments usually set up task forces to gather information in anticipation of the Nairobi World Conference, whereas the review and appraisal of 1990, without a world conference to report to, did not receive the same priority.

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*American Association of Retired Persons; Associated Country Women of the World; Association of African Universities; Baha'i International; Caritas Internationalis; Centre for Development and Population Activities; European Federation for the Welfare of the Elderly; European Union of Women; Housewives in Dialogue; International Alliance of Women; International Cartographic Association; International Centre for Sociological, Penal and Penitentiary Research and Studies; International Confederation of Free Trade Unions; International Council of Voluntary Agencies; International Federation for Home Economics; International Federation of Associations of the Elderly; International Federation of Business and Professional Women; International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics; International Planned Parenthood Federation; International Social Science Council; International Society of City and Regional Planners; International Statistical Institute; International Union of Students; Interparliamentary Union; Muslim World League; National Council of Women and Development; Pan African Institute for Development; Pax Romana; Socialist International Women; Soroptimist International; Sri Aurobindo Society; Women's International Democratic Federation; World Confederation of Labour; World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession; World Federation of Methodist Women; World Federation of Trade Unions; World Movement of Mothers; World Union of Progressive Judaism; World Young Women's Christian Association; Zonta International.

**For the purposes of this report, the category of developed countries includes the industrialized countries of eastern and western Europe, Oceania and North America. Developing countries include countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

PART ONE

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL FACTORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

51. Many of the obstacles to the advancement of women derive from structural and demographic phenomena that change only slowly. Because they are already part of the life history of women, their change has to be reflected in the conditions for younger women. These social and demographic conditions incorporate the pre-existing inequalities that the implementation of the Strategies should eliminate. Primary among these factors are women's life cycle, centring on childbearing, and women's access to education, which factors condition the whole of a woman's life, and thereby her chances for advancement.

52. In addition, for most of the women in the world, the likelihood that they will have jobs, higher income, greater opportunities or programmes designed to meet their needs have been affected by the world economic situation of the 1980s. This situation affected development generally and, for many women, stopped progress in its tracks.

53. Since global and regional factors have shaped events in the first five years of the implementation of the Strategies, they are analysed forthwith. Regional variations are summarized in chapter III.

I. GLOBAL DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL TRENDS IN WOMEN'S LIFE CYCLES

54. According to United Nations estimates, of the 5.1 billion global population in mid-1988, 2.5 billion were women and, on the basis of current trends, 46 million females will enter the population annually up to the year 2000.

55. Women have to provide continual care for their children, for the sick when necessary, for the disabled in the family and, more frequently nowadays, for aging parents, their own and, often, their husband's.

56. What portion of her life a woman will have to spend in this caring role depends on the number of children she has had, on the extent to which her husband shares these duties and on whether other institutions of the society can provide support. While the concept that this responsibility should be shared within the family has been introduced, studies show that sharing is far from equal in most cases, and is largely impossible in households headed by women, the number of which is increasing. As a result, women have often found themselves having to give priority to their caring role over that of improving their status by remunerated employment. There is a long-term effect on women's advancement when daughters, rather than sons and daughters equally, are expected to provide the same service for the next generation on the same basis as their mother rather than developing their other capacities.

57. Most adult women are already embarked on a life cycle that limits their choices; in that sense, the demographic and social phenomena described below affect them. Changes in many cases can only occur in the next generation for girls not yet adult. Other changes can come about only if the adult women of today change their own circumstances, or when society itself changes its expectations. To clarify this, it is noted that most of the women who will be adults in the year 2000 are already adults. Those who will reach adulthood in 2000 are already in the school system or have not entered it and therefore have mostly lost their educational opportunities.

A. Fertility and child-bearing

58. The reproductive role of women has often been examined, but it is only recently that its implications for women's status has been generally realized. The time women devote to childbearing and the lack of social recognition of this time play a considerable role in their opportunity of participating, and on the mode and degree of their participation, in society (see table 2).

Table 2. Demographic indicators for developed and developing countries, mid-1980s
(Years or number)

Indicator	Developed countries	Developing countries		
		Africa	Asia	Latin America
Age at first marriage	23	17	17	19
Age at birth of first child	23	19	20	20
Interval between first and last birth (years)	7	17	16	16
Number of live births	2	7	7	6
Life expectancy at birth of last child	47	29	36	38

Source: Data Highlights, No. 5, February 1989.

59. In many parts of the world, the ages of puberty and marriage have been traditionally linked. This link has now been broken in many countries, partly because of a younger age at menarche and a higher age at marriage, schooling for girls and the entry of women into the formal labour force.

60. There is now a transitional period between childhood and adulthood during which decisions have a considerable impact: a decision made in 1990 on attending school or getting married at 15 or 16 years of age will affect a woman for the remainder of her life. It will affect her chances of obtaining a job in the year 2010, and her level of pension, if any, well into the twenty-first century. Such decisions not only have individual consequences, but also affect society as a whole for decades.

61. In Europe, early fertility, that is between ages 14 and 18, is rare (35 births per 1,000). In Asia, the level is much higher (165 per 1,000); and in Latin America, it is even higher (214 per 1,000). In Africa, nearly one girl out of three has a child before age 18. Many of these girls will spend a life-time struggling to feed and raise children in frequently unfavourable conditions.

62. Generally, a woman who marries at an early age has little opportunity of continuing school or of competing on an equal basis for employment. Furthermore, parents may have less incentive to provide for their daughters'

education if they are expected to marry at a very early age. Even if early marriage is not followed by early pregnancy, it is to be expected that the energies of such women will be mostly devoted to household duties. The figures for Africa and Asia speak for themselves, since, by their sixteenth birthday, 25 per cent of the girls are already married. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the rate is significantly lower at 15 per cent.

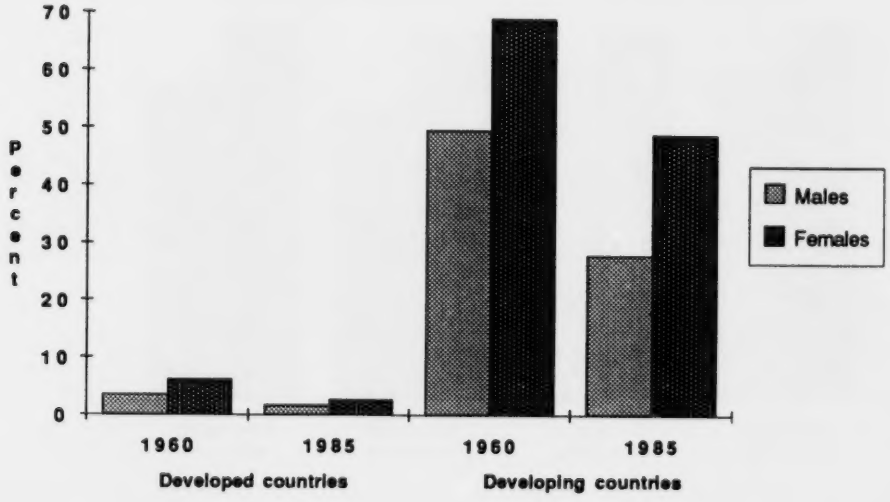
B. Female illiteracy and education

63. As stated in the Strategies "Education is the basis for the full promotion and improvement of the status of women. It is the basic tool that should be given to women in order to fulfil their role as full members of society." 6/ There are different levels at which this tool can be available, starting from basic literacy and proceeding through the full range of third-level education. Education levels for today's adult have been dependent on age. Most adult women have already received as much education as they are likely to receive, unless special efforts are made.

1. Literacy

64. During the period 1960-1985, the global illiteracy rate for adults (15 years of age and over) of both sexes is estimated to have decreased from 39.3 to 27.7 per cent. However, the total number of illiterates has increased due to the considerable increase in population during the same period. In 1985, an estimated 561 million women were illiterate and constituted nearly two thirds of the 889 million illiterates in the world. Although the female illiteracy rate decreased from 45 per cent to 35 per cent during the same period, nearly half of the adult women in developing countries were still illiterate in 1985 (49%) (see also figure I).

Figure I. Illiteracy rates, 1960-1985



Source: Data Highlights, No. 6, figure 1.

65. While developed countries are close to eradicating illiteracy, developing countries, with the exception of those in Latin America, have some distance to go. The 36 least developed countries have the highest female illiteracy rate, an average of 78 per cent each. More disturbing is that the number of female illiterates is increasing not only in absolute terms but also in relation to males.

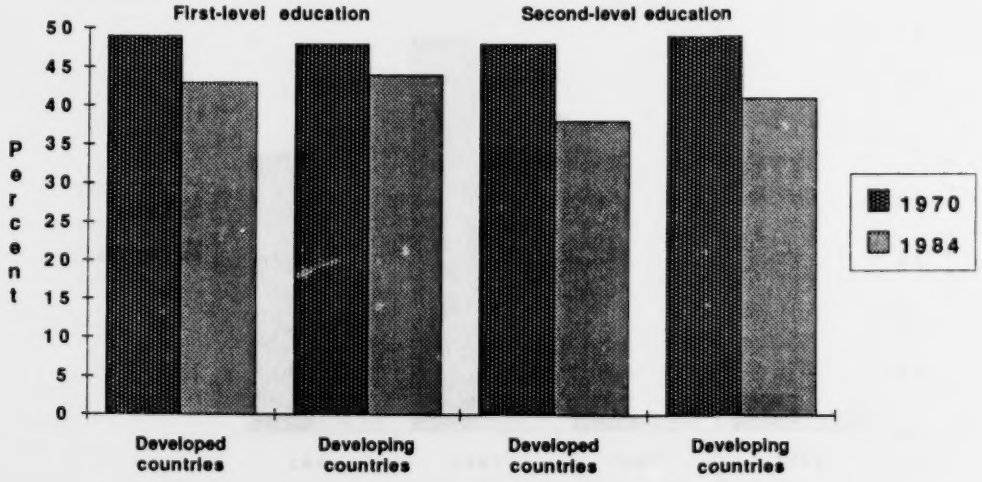
66. Although illiteracy rates are expected to continue to decline in the near future, the projected increase in the total adult population would also result in an increase in the total illiterate population. For example, even a drop of 5 percentage points in the world female illiteracy rate between 1985 and 2000 (and it dropped by only 3.5 points between 1960 and 1970) to a level of 29.9 per cent would still mean that the total number of female illiterates would be 637 million, an increase of 76 million over 1985. And the ratio of female to male illiterates would continue to be unfavourable.

2. Education

(a) First-level

67. Although female enrolment in first-level education has matched the growth of population since 1970, the ratio world-wide of girls to boys in education at the first level has hardly improved: from 80.4 girls to 100 boys in 1970 to 81.6 girls to 100 boys in 1984. To have achieved equality, over 59 million additional girls would have had to be enrolled. In 1984, there were still wide differences between regions, from near parity in the developed regions and in Latin America and the Caribbean to wide differences in Asia and Africa (see figure II).

Figure II. Distribution of females in first- and second-level education



(b) Second-level

68. The increase in absolute numbers for girls in second-level education was large between 1970 and 1984. World-wide, the number of girls in second-level schools increased by 66 per cent during the period. The increase was particularly impressive in developing countries (141%) over the 14-year period.

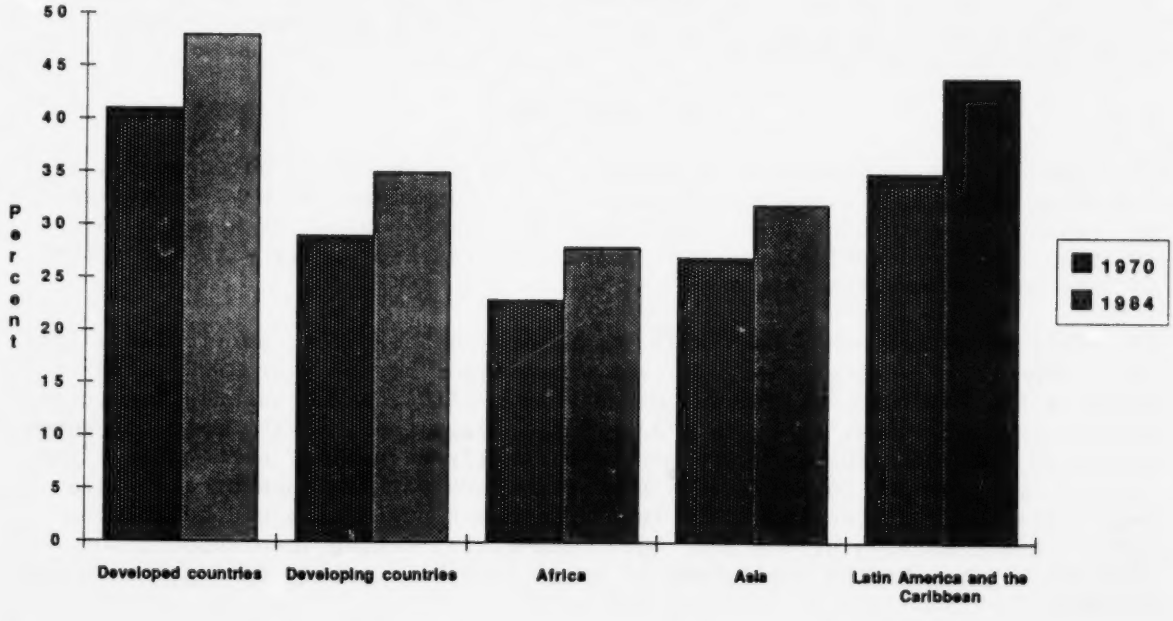
69. In developed countries, adjusted gross enrolment ratios, which relate the enrolment to the corresponding population age group, have been slightly higher for girls than for boys since 1975. In developing countries, the growth rate of enrolment for girls has been faster than for boys, although largely because of the girls' previously disadvantaged position. The result is that girls represented 38 per cent of the total number of enrolled children in the second level in 1970, and 41 per cent in 1984. However, if girls had had the same adjusted gross enrolment ratio as boys (i.e. 42.7% instead of 29.7%) in developing countries, there would have been approximately 30 million more girls enrolled at the second level. This difference could have important implications for the preparation of future university students or females for the skilled labour force.

70. Besides the inequality observed in the enrolment of girls and boys, the chance for a girl in a developing country to be enrolled at the second level is much lower (29.7%) than that of her sister in a developed country (88.4%).

(c) Third-level

71. Third-level education is of particular importance for women as individuals and it largely determines the nature of their contribution to development and society. Furthermore, third-level education determines to a great extent who will be the future managers and decision makers at both the national and international levels. The relative enrolment of women in third-level education for developed and developing countries is shown in figure III.

Figure III. Distribution of women enrolled in third-level education
(Percentage)



Source: Data Highlights, No. 8.

72. Between 1970 and 1984, the enrolment of women in third-level education nearly doubled in developed countries and almost quadrupled in developing countries. Thus, the gap between the two groups of countries is closing rapidly although in 1984 developed countries still had only half as many female students as developing countries. There also remain considerable differences between developing regions.

73. It is clear that in developed countries women's enrolment has reached near equality with that of men's. In developing countries, the picture is different: in 1984 just over one third of the students were women and although a rapid increase in the number of women students can be observed, progress in closing the gap has been slow since the number of male students has also increased. In the developing regions, the Latin American and Caribbean countries have almost reached parity of enrolment. This contrasts with countries in the African and Asian regions where, in 1984, less than one third of the students were women, although it represents an improvement over 1970. The changes in the Latin American and the Caribbean countries can be expected to have a profound impact on those discriminatory aspects of culture that have been based on different levels of education for women and men.

74. The World Bank has found (1984) that the cost per student in higher education as a percentage of per capita gross national product (GNP) varies considerably, according to the country's level of development. Cost per student is 3.7 times (370%) the per capita GNP in developing countries in general; and 8 times (800%) the per capita GNP in sub-Saharan Africa, while in industrial countries it represents only 49 per cent of the per capita GNP.

II. GLOBAL ECONOMIC TRENDS AFFECTING PROGRESS

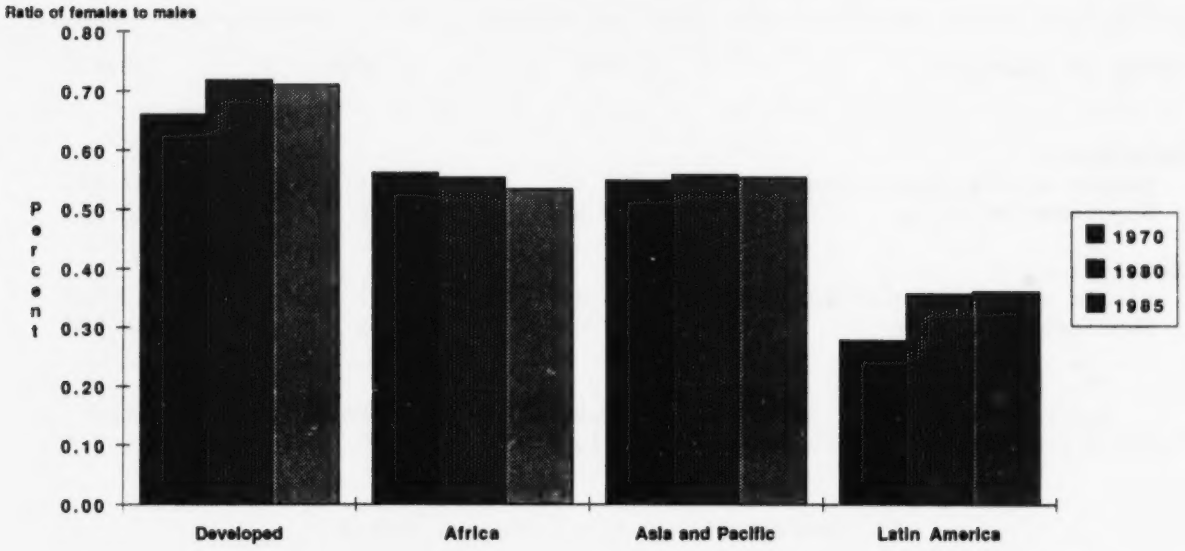
75. Participation of women in the economy depends on economic conditions, which affect their opportunities, as well as on their employment history, which defines their experience.

A. Employment

76. Despite the improvements in women's access to education noted above, the long-term effects on women's employment in the formal sector have in general not improved. As can be seen from figure IV, in no region has women's participation in the economically active population reached parity with men's and in none has it improved recently.

77. This situation has potentially disturbing consequences, particularly for the prospects of achieving significant improvement by the year 2000. Projections by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), based on existing trends, suggest no improvement (see table 3). Not only is the activity rate for women unchanged, but also the gap with men is virtually unchanged, although a significant number of the future active population are not yet born or are still small children. One could expect that government policies would be able to modify this situation by the year 2025, especially taking into account the importance given to the employment of women in public policy during the Decade for Women.

Figure IV. Sex ratio in the economically active population, 1970, 1980 and 1985



Source: Women's Indicators and Statistics data base, compiled by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat.

Table 3. Total activity rates in developed and developing countries (Percentage of the population)

	1975	1985	1990	2000	2025
Developed countries					
Males	57	58	58	58	54
Females	37	39	39	39	37
Developing countries					
Males	54	56	57	58	59
Females	30	31	30	30	30

Source: International Labour Organisation, Economically Active Population, Estimates and Projections 1950-2025 (Geneva, 1986).

78. The magnitude of the task can be seen by estimating the number of supplementary jobs that would be necessary if women had the same activity rates as men in their region, as is shown in table 4. These figures show that in developing countries half a billion more jobs would have to be created immediately, and that deficit is expected to double. The simple quantitative aspect raises questions of the kind of policies necessary or feasible to provide equal job opportunities for men and women. If these jobs are not created, most of the women who need them will find themselves in the informal sector with all the disadvantages that this represents, not only for themselves and their families but also for the State, which will be faced by mounting demands for social support services.

Table 4. Supplementary jobs that would be necessary for women if their activity rates were to equal those of men
(In thousands)

Group of countries	1990	2000	2025
Developed:			
Female active population	361 693	376 144	387 475
Supplementary jobs	118 805	120 971	123 139
Developing:			
Female active population	1 126 827	1 371 825	1 983 429
Supplementary jobs	515 894	649 758	984 590

Source: 1989 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.IV.2), p. 61.

B. World economic situation and trends

79. The economic conditions of the 1980s, by restricting growth and reducing national capacity to mobilize the public sector for social and economic change, have lessened the likelihood of rapid progress towards achieving the objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies.

80. The five years since the first 1989 World Survey have been characterized by uneven economic growth that has often aggravated the differences between regions. In the older industrialized countries, a period of steady economic growth and slowing population growth, often accompanied by lower energy and food costs, has meant an unprecedented increase in material consumption. In some countries in Asia, there has been steady growth through trade and manufacturing that has led to rising levels of prosperity. In most developing regions, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, economic stagnation or negative growth, continued population increase and the prolonged international debt crisis and adjustment policies designed to deal with this have constrained the activities of women as individuals, as carers and providers for families and households, and as participants in the practical development of their countries.

81. Recession and economic restructuring in the face of external debt have led Governments to focus on these problems, often to the neglect of longer term issues that have a direct bearing on the advancement of women. At the same time, pre-existing conditions of inequality - in health and nutrition, levels of literacy and training, access to education and economic opportunity, and in participation in decision-making at all levels - between women and men have sometimes been exacerbated both by the crises themselves and by the policies adopted to cope with them. It is this that gives the current economic situation its gender dimension. Yet economic recovery and advancement towards the social and political goals of development require the contribution of all.

82. All development will be delayed without economic growth. Without it, the pursuit of equality could become a destructive competition between the sexes for ever-diminishing resources. However, there is no automatic link between economic growth and the advancement of women, even in a limited material sense.

The issue is how to accompany policies to restore and stimulate growth with programmes to eliminate basic inequalities in terms of access to services and opportunities.

83. Although both women and men suffer the effects of the crisis, it is more often women who are willing or forced to modify their lives to adjust to the changed economic circumstances of their households. The forms of this adaptation vary, in accordance with the level of development of their countries and their own standards of living.

84. Data on employment and unemployment are inconclusive as to the effects of the crisis and the ensuing adjustment on women's employment conditions. Some of the countries that underwent severe crisis and strict adjustment measures showed that women's employment grew, while in others women's employment declined. It is likely that a first effect of the crisis might have been a withdrawal of women from the labour market, while a further deepening of the crisis forced women back to the labour market, possibly into occupations of lower productivity and income. Unemployment is reported to have grown more for men than for women during the crisis, while it is possible to detect a longer term decline in women's employment in its immediate aftermath. It is possible that women are not the first to be laid off, but they are certainly not the first to be re-hired when the economy picks up again.

85. One effect of the economic situation observed in the 1989 World Survey was a tendency for improvements in the relative position of girls in school enrolment to stop temporarily. There was a tendency in those countries where adjustment was particularly severe for girls to be withdrawn from school, presumably to help families in economic activity or as substitute carers.

86. The level of nutrition of a population is sensitive to levels of income. Malnutrition is reported to have increased in many of the countries that applied adjustment measures in the 1980s. The decline in the purchasing power of the poor has worsened nutrition. Whether there has been a systematic sex bias in the distribution of food within poor families in favour of their male members is difficult to say because of lack of data.

87. On the basis of research made in several countries on intra-household feeding patterns, which proved that women tended to eat less and also to eat less nutritive food, it is possible to argue that, in periods of declining family incomes, women have suffered malnutrition more than men. Reliable data on maternal mortality, to support this argument, are not available for a sufficient number of countries. Because of the long-term trends towards a reduction in these rates, due for example to better hygiene, wider provision of medical assistance to pregnant women, and better overall health conditions since childhood, the effects of the crisis tend to be absorbed. Also in Latin America, where the debt crisis was felt with greater strength, maternal mortality rates show a constant decline in the 1980s, with the exception of a few countries and a few years, which are better explained by unreliable statistics.

III. REGIONAL TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

88. Regional appraisals have been made by the five regional commissions. They, like the statistical material presented previously, show that there are also common issues and problems that, although they vary by degree, characterize all regions.

A. Africa*

89. Structural adjustment policies have been found to be gender biased since they ignore the unpaid labour of women. The fact is that unpaid labour in villages and families is the final lifeline for people all over the world when macro-economic measures do not work or even collapse.

1. Employment

90. In the services sector, there is a marked improvement in female employment in most African countries even though the proportion of women professionals has increased less rapidly than that of men. The sectoral distribution in agriculture, services and industry (1981-1987) shows that the participation of women in Africa as a whole is highest in agriculture and lowest in industry. However, the situation varies from subregion to subregion and from country to country within the subregions.

91. Employment in the informal sector continues to play a key role and to provide hope for survival for a greater majority of women and the urban poor. In many countries, particularly in West Africa, a great many women are involved in the informal sector, usually in small-scale projects.

92. In general, although many countries are involved in income-generating activities, e.g. handicrafts, gardening and textiles, many of these are centred on charitable activities. Projects in the informal sector should become more viable, economically sound and self-supporting. In some instances, it has been reported that women who own businesses are confronted with numerous economic constraints that reduce the viability of their business.

2. Education and training

93. During the last 10 years, there has been modest progress in the participation of female students at all levels of the school system, particularly at the primary school level. The increased enrolment of girls in primary school is largely the result of government development plans and the fact that education at the primary level is free in many countries. The number of female students decreases, however, at the higher secondary level and hence at university level because of the female dropout rate in most African countries. There are certain social and cultural factors that negatively affect female participation at higher levels of the school system, such as the increasing rate of teenage pregnancies and marriage in secondary schools that contribute significantly to the high female dropout rate.

94. With respect to non-formal education, national literacy programmes in several African countries have been the largest sustained adult education programmes with women being the majority of the participants. Efforts are being made to link these national literacy programmes with functional skills, income-generating activities and extension services.

95. Fewer girls than boys are enrolled in science subjects. Also, the majority of girls and women are cut off at an early age from a wide range of careers and interests in science-based training programmes. Many girls leaving school operate in an environment full of machinery and labour-saving devices. They should be exposed to science so that they can effectively participate in science- and technological-based activities.

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*Prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa.

3. Law and legislation

96. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is an international bill of rights for women. What is required now is the implementation of the Convention by, for example, revising some laws such as the marriage, employment and education acts, to accommodate women's equality issues. Some Governments are already doing this by establishing law review commissions.

97. In general, the majority of women in Africa are not aware of their legal rights. In addition to establishing law review commissions, action-oriented strategies with a view to changing the socio-economic and legal position of women need to be developed.

4. Women at the decision-making level and legislation

98. The visible and public exercise of power by women is controversial in many societies. In most African countries, very few women are in politics. Political participation is a key issue for women because it is an indicator of their status as well as a tool to improve their condition in society. In many African countries, women have the right to vote and they do vote; the mere act of voting, however, cannot be regarded as a measure of political consciousness or participation. In many instances, poor rural and urban women are mobilized during political campaigns to vote. In such situations, women vote in high numbers but they do not participate in any other political activities, particularly at the decision-making level.

99. Although there has been an increase in the number of women entering the arena of decision-making and power, their path has not been easy. They had and still have to struggle against considerable odds in order to succeed in politics as well as getting into key positions in the government, parastatal organizations and institutions. There are still very few women in those areas of activity, to which access is, in most cases, restricted to those who hold higher academic qualifications. This situation continues to limit women's access to economic, social and political power. Thus, for instance, it is still very difficult for women to gain a foothold in those professions that bestow recognition and influence, especially when they are financially highly rewarding.

100. In general, although the number of women in high positions and at the decision-making level has increased, the situation is still very unsatisfactory.

5. Problems and constraints

(a) Structure

101. Structure is one of the major problems faced by Women in Development (WID) programmes, especially the location of women's affairs units in ministries. In most cases, national machinery is not located at a high central position within the government bureaucracy, is inadequately financed and is usually understaffed.

(b) Policy measures

102. Many countries have not yet adopted a national policy on women in development. This is a *sine qua non* for increased participation of women in national development.

6. Conclusions

103. Since 1985 and within the framework of the Strategies, some social and economic changes in favour of women in most countries in Africa have been apparent in different sectors. Governments have increasingly recognized the significant contribution of women to national development as evidenced by the efforts made by some to strengthen women's national machinery and women's affairs units in ministries.

104. The implementation of the Strategies, however, has been slow because of lack of financial and human resources, lack of national policy and lack of commitment by some Governments to WID.

105. Nevertheless, even though it is an exceedingly slow process, changes have occurred. In the employment sector, there is an undeniable tendency for women to move into the professional categories that were occupied almost exclusively by men until recently. In education and training, there has been an increase of girls' enrolment at all levels of the education system.

106. Much indeed still remains to be done, but the essential point is that Governments have to make crucial commitments if they are to implement the Forward-looking Strategies. This is why the Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development on the Implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies on the Advancement of Women in Africa was a forum to define more clearly and set attainable, realistic targets for the region.

B. Asia and the Pacific*

107. In preparation for review and appraisal, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) monitored the implementation of the Strategies in the Asian and Pacific region by means of a questionnaire sent to national focal points in April 1988. This report is based partly on the responses from nine countries.

1. Equality

108. The reports submitted by many of the signatory countries to the Convention express the view that the Convention has strengthened each country's political will to plan and monitor systematically its efforts to eliminate discrimination.

109. Many of those countries had instituted most of the legal measures prescribed in the Convention even before becoming a party to it. Some cite the Decade for Women as having stimulated the reform of laws that discriminated against women and the adoption of new ones that provide equal rights and opportunities.

110. In some countries, discriminatory legislative provisions in the social, economic and political spheres continue to exist, including provisions in the civil, penal and commercial codes and certain administrative rules and regulations. Civil codes in some instances have not been adequately studied to determine which laws still discriminate against women, and what is the legal capacity and status of women, married women in particular, regarding

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*Prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

nationality, inheritance, ownership and control of property, freedom of movement, and the custody and nationality of children. In addition, there are cases where certain aspects of the law (e.g. customary provisions) are operating within multiple and conflicting legal systems.

111. Although much progress has been made in legislation, measures are necessary for its effective implementation and enforcement. De facto discrimination, particularly with reference to marital or family status, persists despite legislative action. Due to various degrees of legal literacy, the law as recourse has not automatically benefited all women equally. Socio-economic inequalities also affect women's ability to exercise their legal rights without fear of recrimination or intimidation.

112. Bridging the gap between the elimination of de jure and de facto discrimination against women is considered by those countries to be their most difficult task in attaining the goal of equal rights for women.

(a) Equality in social participation

113. Women's non-governmental organizations, which were strengthened during the Decade for Women, have continued to complement government efforts in promoting gender awareness among the public in order to change attitudes towards women. But there is evidence that not much progress has been achieved in increasing women's participation in mass communication media, which has been one of the major instruments propagating their traditional roles.

(b) Equality in political participation and decision-making

114. It is reported that women are becoming more visible in political life as they occupy a wider range of public sector positions, such as ministers, directors, deputy directors, justices and local government heads. Although they still constitute a relatively small percentage of those holding public office at the national, provincial and local levels, such representation has been increasing in some countries. Women's participation at the local and village level public offices also continues to increase, though remaining low.

115. Effective participation of women in development has been impeded by the difficult international economic situation, the debt crisis, poverty, continued population growth, rising divorce rates, increasing migration and the growing incidence of female-headed households. Neither the expansion of employment for women nor the recognition that women constitute a significant proportion of producers has been accompanied by social adjustments to ease women's burden of child and household care. In fact, the economic recession had led to a reduction in investments, particularly in those services that allow greater societal sharing of the social and economic costs of child care and housework.

(c) Institutional structures for women's advancement

116. National focal points for the integration of women in the development process have been established, mostly during the Decade for Women. However, those focal points continue in most developing countries to be confronted by lack of resources and staff, high staff turnover, low commitment of staff to women's concerns, and lack of political and administrative mandates to influence policy formulation and co-ordinate the programmes on women of different government agencies. However, a few countries report the creation of a women's unit in each line agency to take responsibility for integrating women's concerns into the agency's policies and programmes.

2. Development

117. Since formal development plans usually serve as the source of government mandates, it has become imperative for women's concerns to be integrated into mainstream development planning. The continued low priority given to women in development planning is shown by the nature of planning for women's advancement in the region. Most countries report the inclusion of women's concerns in the social sector chapter of the national development plan. Some cite the inclusion of provisions on women in the different sections of the plan.

118. Barriers to women's equal opportunities in employment continue: high unemployment disadvantages women relative to men on account of women's lower skill levels, traditional attitudes concerning their role and protective legislation tending to raise labour costs incurred for hiring women workers. Complex protective legislation - such as maternity benefits, special health-care services, the right to protection of health and safety in work conditions and other labour standards, and social security coverage - had been adopted in many developing countries prior to the Decade for Women. Many of the protective laws are often violated with the consent of workers, including women, who fear for their jobs.

119. The rapid increase in married women's employment over the past decade is an important emerging trend. Possible explanations cited are the falling birth rate, lightened domestic chores and child-rearing owing to improved living standards, and a greater desire for self-realization among educated women. However, in the case of developing countries, the trend can be explained more by the economic necessity for additional family members to enter the labour force in order to augment family income. Even with the increasing participation by women, they continue to bear the primary responsibility for child care and domestic work in both developed and developing countries. That double burden partly explains women's relative disadvantage in employment, where interruptions in their working lives and preference for part-time work contribute to their narrower career opportunities.

(a) Health

120. Women's organizations in many developing countries have been involved in the local and national level planning and implementation and monitoring of health care. Some countries or areas have implemented measures to ensure women's participation in higher professional and managerial positions in health institutions.

121. Various health education and information programmes are reported by most countries. Programmes for training of nurses' aides, primary health care, family welfare and other public health and social services programmes are also used as vehicles to promote the proper use of essential drugs by women and their families. Most countries cite a variety of ongoing programmes that provide women with public health and related social welfare services. Programmes to promote the development and use of locally produced food for weaning infants have been established in most of them.

(b) Education

122. The main obstacle to women's emancipation is the pervasive influence of traditional social attitudes and customs, deeply rooted in what are referred to in some cases as the feudal patriarchal system. This obstacle has been identified by almost all countries, regardless of their level of development and socio-economic system. Those social attitudes and values, exacerbated by

pervasive poverty in many developing countries, are said to have resulted in different levels of human capital among men as compared with women, and explain, to a great extent, women's continued disadvantages in society. It is also observed that the disadvantages of women in rural areas are more severe.

123. To ensure that males and females have equal access to education at all levels, orientation for policy makers, planners and educational personnel and for parents has been undertaken. Although equal educational opportunities are guaranteed in the constitutions of many countries, women have often been confined to traditional fields of education. Efforts have been made in several countries or areas to encourage women to acquire education in science and technology, and other vocational training. To enable women to take up science, management and other technical subjects at all levels, incentives (scholarships) and counselling services have been provided to women in a number of countries.

124. Efforts have also been made to promote the functional literacy of women, with special emphasis on health, nutrition and economic skills for urban and rural women.

(c) Food, water and agriculture

125. Many countries report programmes that have been developed by the Government to increase productive capability in food production, off-farm employment opportunities, access to energy sources, safe and sufficient water, and irrigation facilities for rural women. However, the inheritance laws in a number of countries continue to include discriminatory provisions against women in rural areas.

(d) Industry, trade and commercial services

126. Government agencies in a number of countries have co-ordinated activities to integrate women's concerns in industrial policy-making. These agencies have initiated and implemented programmes and projects addressing the needs of small- and medium-scale enterprises in priority sectors and have assisted in developing women's associations in industries in the private sector. Skills training, credit and marketing assistance, technological assistance and other productivity guidelines have also been provided to women entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs. Support programmes are carried out in some countries to encourage women in the informal sector.

(e) Science and technology

127. Only a few countries have conducted evaluation studies on the role of women in scientific and technological development.

(f) Communications

128. Some countries cite the active role of non-governmental organizations in communication and mass media activities concerning women. Most Governments have no policies or guidelines to influence the media to promote equality between men and women.

(g) Housing, settlement, community development and transport

129. Only a few countries have given active consideration to women's needs of housing, settlement, community development and transport.

130. Government-supported programmes aimed at increasing women's land ownership and tenancy rights are reported by several countries.

131. In the transport sector, women participated in decision-making regarding issues of transport subsidies, choice of technology and transport routes. Women's role as operators and owners of the means of transport have been promoted.

(h) Energy

132. In a few countries, women participate in energy policy and strategy formulation. On energy use and energy conservation at household level, women are usually direct targets of campaign measures. Some countries cite major obstacles that authorities encounter in promoting equal participation of women in energy planning and management. Those most frequently cited are lack of gender awareness by the public, lack of appropriate education, skills and information among women, and men's dominant role as decision makers in that field.

(i) Environment

133. Little has been achieved in creating alternative means of livelihood for women and their families who have been deprived of their traditional livelihood owing to environmental degradation. Programmes, either informational or educational, have been organized by some countries in order to create awareness of environmental issues and to increase women's potential contribution in conserving and improving the environment.

(j) Social services

134. Some countries and areas have undertaken activities in order to raise public awareness of the need for shared responsibilities between men and women in producing and rearing children. Measures have been introduced to provide shelter and support to abused women and children.

3. Peace

135. Special peace programmes with women's participation have been organized by several countries as part of the World Disarmament Campaign.

4. Areas of special concern

136. Assistance to women affected by drought and other natural disasters in some countries has been provided in the form of food security programmes and income-generating activities.

137. Destitution as an extreme form of poverty has had far-reaching effects on women, and the number of women affected has been increasing steadily. Governments have undertaken various measures to satisfy the special needs and concerns of destitute women.

138. The problem of victims of trafficking and involuntary prostitution constitute one of the most urgent concerns. Most responding Governments have taken legislative action to suppress the exploitation of women and to punish with imprisonment those trafficking in women or forcing women into prostitution. Some Governments have been providing social rehabilitation programmes. Programmes to increase public awareness on violence against women or prostitution have also been undertaken.

139. Women as the sole supporters of their families face particular social, economic and legal difficulties. Some Governments have given special attention to this group of women by ensuring their equal access to resources.

140. Almost all Governments provide some support for refugees and displaced women by means of food aid, education and training, health care, employment and economic opportunities.

C. Europe*

141. Attention in the market economies of Europe and North America has been centred on the participation of women in the economy and on their situation in the labour market. It is noted in the latest Economic Survey of Europe in 1987-1988 7/ that one of the major dynamic factors during the last decade in employment growth was the rapid rise in the participation of women in the labour force. In 1987, in 15 countries of Western Europe combined, 60 per cent of women were members of the labour force, compared with just over 50 in 1975. On average, this implies nearly a percentage point increase in women's activity rates every year. While these have been increasing continuously during the 12-year period considered, the participation rate of men has steadily fallen (from about 87 to 84 per cent between 1970 and 1987). As a result women accounted for more than two thirds of the growth of the labour force since 1975, and their share in the total increased from about 37 per cent in 1975 to nearly 42 per cent in 1987.

142. Experience over a longer period, however, suggests that the response of female participation rates to economic fluctuations is counter-cyclical and in the past few years the growth rate of the female labour force, compared to that of males, has not been as rapid as previously, especially during the recession of the early 1980s. With the exception of only three countries, the average annual growth rates of the female labour force between 1983 and 1986, which can be considered the period of recovery, were lower than in the four preceding years. The estimates for 1987, however, suggest a weakening of this downward trend: female labour-force growth still declined in comparison with the average for 1983-1986 in six countries, but stabilized or increased in the others.

143. Although women have entered the labour market in increasing numbers, their position in it seems to be weaker than that of men, as reflected in unemployment rates. For the 15 countries combined, the average unemployment rate of women in 1987 was close to 1 percentage point higher than that of men. With few exceptions, the data for individual countries confirm the higher rate of unemployment among women.

144. The estimates suggest that the difference between male and female unemployment rates has tended to narrow during the recession. Whereas in 1979 the unemployment rate of women in the 15 countries combined was nearly 2 percentage points higher than that of men, in 1983 it was less than half a point more. The data for 1987 suggest, moreover, that the difference between the two rates has increased again, but is still not as large as in 1979. Although account must be taken of the fact that unemployment in many countries is still very high and, consequently, that present conditions cannot be considered as "normal", the female-male difference in unemployment rates was less than 1 percentage point in 1987.

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*Prepared by the Economic Commission for Europe.

D. Latin America and the Caribbean*

145. The region of Latin America and the Caribbean is currently experiencing the most severe economic and social crisis of the past 50 years. One of the effects of the crisis and of the debt has been an accelerating decline in the quality of life of the population, which has had a particularly dramatic effect on the living conditions of women. There has been a sharp drop in the funds earmarked for the implementation of social policies, particularly those relating to education, health and housing, and the social well-being of the population has been strongly affected.

1. Employment

146. Although participation in the labour force varies in accordance with the circumstances in each country, the incorporation of women has occurred on a scale that was unimaginable 30 years ago. The number of women in the labour force of Latin America and the Caribbean increased threefold between 1950 and 1980, rising from 10 million to 32 million.

147. None the less, the deterioration of the employment situation brought on by the crisis severely affects women, who form a majority of the unemployed and of those in the informal sector.

148. The services sector remains predominant in the economic participation of women and the process of development of services continues. Towards 1980, the percentages corresponding to this sector fluctuated between 38 per cent and 55 per cent of the total number of active women. Although their make up varies, personal services remain important, while the role played by social services is increasing. In most countries, office employees constitute the second most numerous group, and are steadily increasing.

149. The work performed by housewives cannot be ignored. Between 30 and 50 per cent of women over 25 are performing unpaid domestic tasks.

2. Education

150. A tremendous expansion has taken place in formal education and a growing number of women are enrolled in it. However, there are major differences between countries, between rural and urban areas, and between native, indigenous and black populations. In some countries, the illiteracy rates are as high as 90 per cent for elderly women, while in the 15-19 year age group, they do not exceed 15 per cent, and are the same for both sexes. In addition, in some countries, particularly those with high illiteracy rates, women still represent a minority of school enrolments and a majority of school drop-outs, which increases the difficulties they encounter in obtaining employment.

151. On the one hand, opportunities are now nearly equal at high-income levels; on the other, the most notable instances of discrimination have persisted among the rural poor and different ethnic and racial groups. Higher education for women still relates to skills considered as being most appropriate for women culturally, although there is no doubt that women are increasingly beginning to educate themselves for work and not merely to perform a traditional social role.

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*Prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

3. Health

152. In health, the majority of countries still fail to provide adequate free public services for a large percentage of the population, and curative medicine predominates. Health services tend to be concentrated in the urban areas. Since many of them are offered on a private basis, access is difficult for the majority of the population. Women's child-bearing role creates specific health requirements. Very frequent pregnancies combined with poor nutrition and lack of rest lead to debilitation, malnutrition and fatigue, resulting in high indices of mortality in childbirth. Adolescent pregnancies, which are on the rise, and induced abortions, which are very numerous and for the most part carried out clandestinely, constitute a threat to the lives of girls and women. All this is often compounded by cultural factors that invite discrimination against girls with regard to medical attention and nutrition. Despite the gravity of the situation, no progress has been made in the area of health and sex education for the population in general and for young people in particular.

4. Legislation

153. Legislation shows substantial progress. More than three quarters of the countries of the region have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The majority of them have also adopted domestic measures in the legal field in order to apply the Convention. In addition, in recent years most of the Governments in the region have set up specialized agencies to help to raise the status of women and have adopted plans and policies designed to ensure equality of opportunity. These national mechanisms are attached to ministries as government departments, divisions or offices in the family, social welfare, education, cultural, labour-planning and economic development sectors. However, most do not have enough resources to implement their programmes. Several countries have drawn up projects to amend provisions that discriminate against women, particularly provisions in their labour code (e.g. maternity privileges) and their penal code (e.g. rape). De facto discrimination still exists however, because of failure to comply with the law or the provisions in the covenants.

5. The family

154. The sharp deterioration of the current economic situation in Latin America and the Caribbean has resulted in serious family problems, which affect women more than men. The crisis has caused traditions to deteriorate, the result often being instability and violence detrimental to women and children. In some countries, migration from the countryside to the city has increased, as has the number of households headed by women. In addition, the traditional allocation of roles, in which housework and the raising of children are regarded as the responsibility for women and not of men, persists.

6. General participation

155. Women, who represent half the population and in many countries more than half the electorate, still participate only minimally in the executive and legislative organs of their countries. The structure of their political participation is eminently pyramidal: the majority of them are among the lower party echelons and the higher the level of leadership, the fewer the women in it. While the political awareness of women has increased, significant obstacles to their participation in political life remain.

156. In recent decades in low-income districts of major cities, new social movements have emerged that are comprised of and led by women. Women form mothers' clubs, take part in social welfare programmes run by churches, take the lead in movements to obtain day-care centres or health facilities, participate in voluntary and vocational associations, establish organizations to design survival strategies to deal with the grave situation that they face or form pressure groups to obtain housing or infrastructure services. They also take part in associations of professionals and producers, federations of women employed in different branches of production and federations of peasant women.

157. Participation by women in social movements and their composing a social movement are phenomena that seem to suggest a broad cultural transformation linked to new approaches to policy-making. Women have played a basic role in the articulation of grievances and demands that they be settled. In this process, non-governmental organizations have made a decisive contribution to the design of projects for mobilizing and assisting women, from the low-income sector in particular.

E. Western Asia*

158. Arab women confront numerous development challenges. They are required to produce and participate in the process of development in all its aspects: economic, social and political. Women face obstacles to development deriving from the historical economic and other structural factors that have shaped the societies in which they live. Included in these are cultural values that, on the one hand, may emphasize materialism and, on the other, may call for women to return to their reproductive and nurturing roles while relinquishing their other societal participatory roles.

159. Statistics on female participation in the region are often inadequate, but an examination of these, together with other information of a legal, economic or social type, suggests that in many countries, the Forward-looking Strategies have not yet been implemented.

1. Equality

160. Although the content of the Convention appears to be included in most of the constitutions of Arab States, only a few of them have ratified it, some with reservations on key provisions. Few States have implemented the Convention in the form of binding enabling legislation. The Convention has been met with resistance from fundamentalist political movements that allege that it equates men and women in inheritance, which is said to be against the teaching of Islam.

161. Inequality is still manifest in the Arab region in labour legislation as well as personal status legislation and laws pertaining to the right of children to obtain their mother's nationality. Moreover, in some Arab countries women are forbidden by law to be in certain leadership positions and to follow such occupations as that of judge or president, or even to participate in the country's legislative bodies.

162. Two factors are involved: (a) current ideological trends encourage women to stay at home in order to alleviate problems of unemployment; and

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*Prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

(b) laws do not offer sufficient protection to the majority of working women. Most women engaged in the labour market are not protected by law, by virtue of the fact that they are mainly agricultural labourers or working in the informal sector, although Arab labour legislation has abided by most regional and international recommendations concerning the protection of women against certain tedious jobs.

163. In terms of political participation, Palestinian women are highly active both in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in activities related to the Intifadah, during which many have been imprisoned. Palestinian women are also active in organizations ranging from medical ones, such as the Red Crescent, to more directly political ones.

2. Development

164. More women are benefiting from education in the Arab world, but illiteracy continues to be a major impediment to woman's development and one that places them at a disadvantage with men. Moreover female participation in primary and preparatory education is fairly low both in absolute terms and relative to the male population. The same holds true with regard to secondary education.

165. However, this situation may change rapidly if the trends recently identified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) continue, since progress in women's participation on behalf of women is improving more rapidly than in some other developing regions.

166. The participation of women in the Arab labour force is fairly low. In 1975, an estimated 3.5 million females were in the Arab labour force, the equivalent of 9 per cent of the total. This number increased by 1980 to 4.2 million, but still constituted 9 per cent of the total labour force. Estimated projections for the year 2000 do not promise a marked improvement in the numbers of working women. However, the very few working women might be due to the concept of work employed in those statistics, that is, the highest percentage of female participation appears in those economies that are basically agricultural. Female agricultural labour is mostly accepted, however, a large proportion of female agricultural labour is unpaid.

167. Statistics on health conditions for women are scarce. However, the conditions of armed conflict under which women live in the area affect health conditions as does the fact that budgets allocated to defence in most Arab States are increasing, to the detriment of budgets allocated for other areas such as education and health.

168. A last important indicator of women's poor health conditions is the high fertility rates that greatly tax women's biological role. Moreover, most women in the Arab world suffer from malnutrition and the spread of anaemia.

3. Peace

169. Little improvement was noted during the Decade for Women in peace conditions in the region. The resolution of the conflict between Iran, Islamic Republic of and Iraq has been a positive factor. However, many Arab women, particularly Palestinian women, are still affected by the situations of armed conflict and occupation in which they find themselves.

PART TWO

REVIEW AND APPRAISAL AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

170. Review and appraisal at the national level is largely based on what Governments perceive to have been their achievements. Absence of information may well reflect areas in which progress has not been sufficient to report. Considered together with global and regional analyses that have shown a marked slowing of progress, the national reports suggest areas in which, on the one hand, greater action could lead to renewed progress and, on the other hand, new tactics must be adopted to ensure implementation of the Strategies.

IV. EQUALITY

A. Implementation of international standards at the national level

1. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

171. Under the theme of equality, the main international instrument is the Convention. Signing the Convention means a declaration of intent by the State concerned, but not a commitment to implement the Convention. Only when the Convention is ratified or acceded to is a State bound to implement it.

172. By 31 October 1989, the Convention had been ratified or acceded to by 99 States (60%) out of a total of 169 States Members of the United Nations or observers; another 18 (11%) States have signed but not ratified the Convention; and 52 (30%) States have neither signed nor ratified, and are thus completely outside the Convention's coverage (see table 5). There are notable regional differences in acceptance of the Convention. Since the populations of countries vary, it is of interest to determine how much of the population in different regions is covered by the Convention. Over 60 per cent of the population of each region lives in a country that is a State party to the Convention. In Latin America, it is nearly 95 per cent. See figures V and VI.

173. CEDAW has met annually since 1982 and, in addition to reviewing reports of States parties, has made general recommendations to them. CEDAW recommended, in 1987, that States parties should adopt education and public information programmes that would help to eliminate prejudices and existing practices that hinder full social equality of women (Convention, article 5, and Forward-looking Strategies, paragraph 39). CEDAW appealed to States parties to consider withdrawing reservations made by 39 State, that appeared to be incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention.

174. CEDAW also recommended that States parties should "make more use of temporary special measures such as positive action, preferential treatment or quota systems to advance women's integration into education, the economy, politics and employment. 8/ Such measures were considered particularly important with regard to article 8 of the Convention to ensure women the opportunity of representing their Government at the international level and of participating in the work of international organizations without any discrimination. CEDAW further recommended that States parties should establish and/or strengthen national machinery at a high level of Government, monitor the situation of women comprehensively and carry out strategies and measures to eliminate discrimination. 8/ CEDAW also recommended that States parties should include in their periodic reports information on critical areas

Table 5. Number and percentage of countries within each region having ratified or signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

	Ratified before 1985		Ratified after 1985		Signed but not ratified		Not signed		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Developed	23	66	7	20	3	9	2	6	35	100
Asia and the Pacific	12	25	3	6	5	10	28	58	48	100
Africa	17	33	11	22	6	12	17	33	51	100
Latin America and the Caribbean	23	66	3	9	4	12	5	14	35	100
Total	75		24		18		52		169	
Percentage	45		14		11		30		100	

Figure V. Distribution of countries within each region having signed or ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

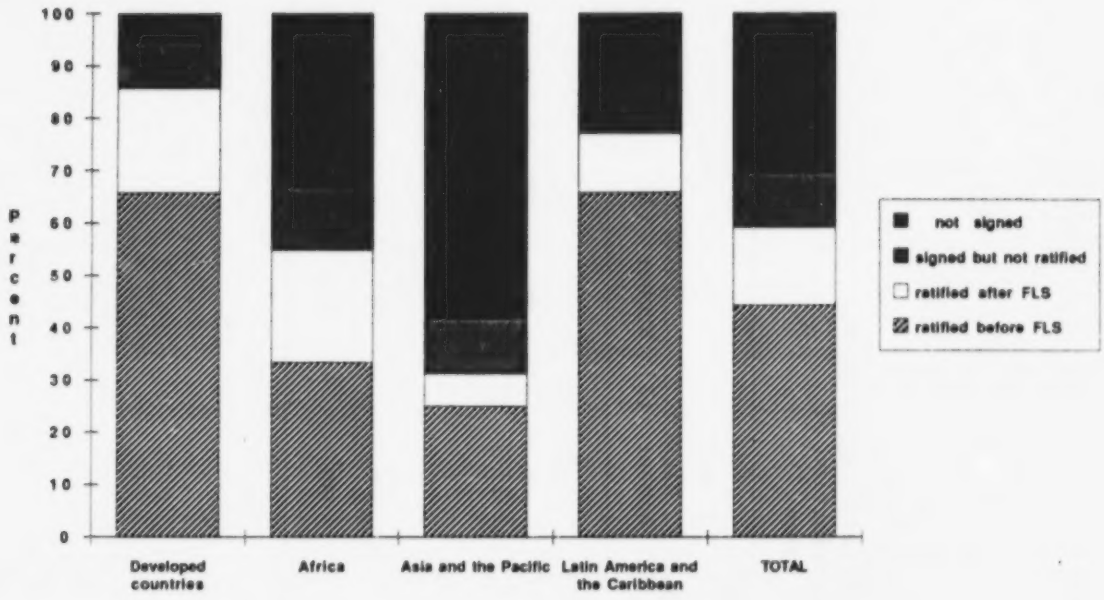
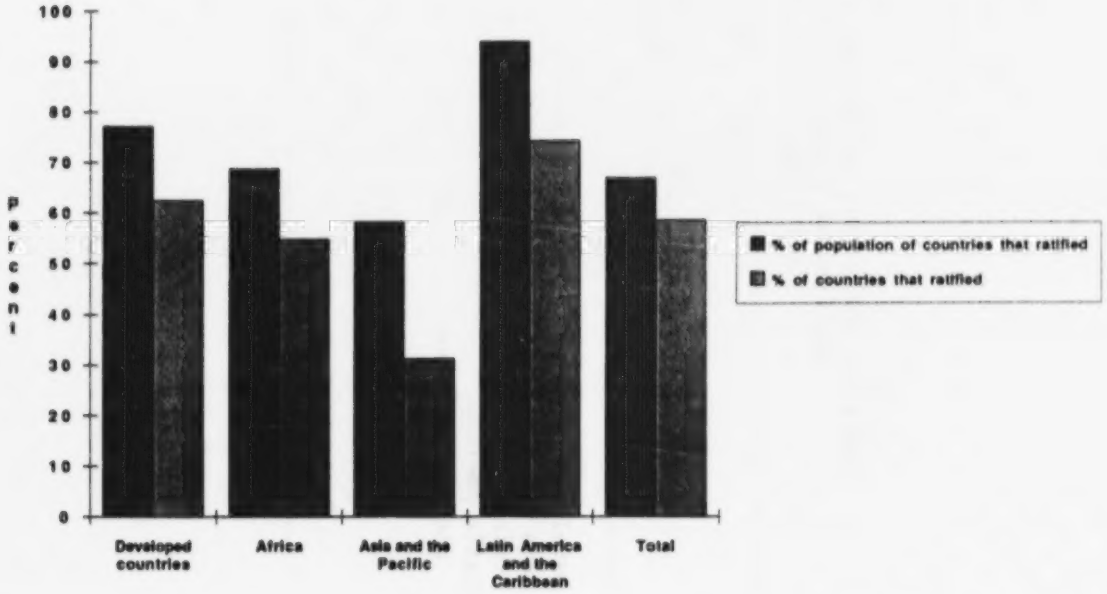


Figure VI. Distribution of the population by region and the countries by region, covered by the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women



in the implementation of articles of the Convention that protect women against all kinds of violence in everyday life (A/44/38, p. 81), that ensure the application in practice of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value to overcome the gender-segregation in the labour market. It made a strong appeal for national statistics to ensure that data could be disaggregated according to gender (A/44/38, p. 82).

2. Application of International Labour Organisation conventions with Reference to the Forward-looking Strategies

175. The Forward-looking Strategies recommend that special measures should be taken to ratify the ILO conventions on equality of opportunities and treatment and equal pay. 9/ Since 1985, the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100), 1951, has been ratified by two countries: Cyprus (19 November 1987) and Malta (9 June 1988), bringing the total number of ratifications to 109. The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111), 1958, has been ratified by three further countries: Cameroon (13 May 1988); San Marino (19 December 1986) and Democratic Yemen (3 January 1989), bringing the total number of ratifications to 110. These two instruments are among the ILO instruments that have received the largest number of ratifications.

176. In 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations made observations on the application of the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100). The reports on the application of the Convention were due, under the Constitution of ILO, article 22, in 1986 and 1988.

177. Satisfaction on the progress in application of the Convention related to the following countries: 1986: Guyana, the Netherlands; 1987: Canada, Denmark, Norway; and 1988: Canada, Finland, France (New Caledonia), Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique. The information obtained on applications of this Convention was also considered by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations at the relevant sessions of the International Labour Conference. The Committee of the Conference more particularly examined the cases of the following countries: 1986: Switzerland; 1987: the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Austria, Jamaica; 1988: India, Switzerland; and the United Kingdom.

178. In accordance with the Constitution, article 19, the governing Body of ILO invited Governments to report on their law and practice respecting equal pay for men and women workers, as laid down in the Equal Pay Convention (No. 100) and Recommendation (No. 90), 1951. Reports were submitted by 130 States and six non-metropolitan territories. The report of the Committee of Experts 10/ on equal remuneration was considered by the Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations of the Conference, 11/ which expressed its gratification at the excellent quality of the survey, which embodied a thorough analysis of approaches and problems encountered in applying the principle of equal pay for equal work. The Committee concluded that ILO should continue to assign particular importance to the matter of equal pay, as basic to the acknowledgement of the value and dignity of all persons.

179. In 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989, implementation of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111), 1958, was the subject of observations by the Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. 12/ The reports on application of the Convention were due, under article 22 of the ILO Constitution, in 1987 and 1989.

180. The Committee was able to express satisfaction relating to certain measures taken by the Governments to promote equality of opportunities and treatment free from sex discrimination: 1986: the Netherlands; 1987: Australia, the Central African Republic, Finland, Portugal; 1988: Belgium, Canada, Italy, Peru; 1989: Barbados and Spain. The information obtained on application of this Convention was also examined by the Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations at the relevant sessions of the International Labour Conference.

181. In accordance with article 19 of the Constitution, the Governing Body invited 13/ Governments to report on their law and practice respecting the promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation, as laid down in the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111) and Recommendation (No. 111), 1958. Reports were submitted by 141 States and 18 non-metropolitan territories on this occasion. The report of the Committee of Experts 14/ on equality in employment and occupation was examined by the Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations of the Conference, which drew attention to its excellent quality. The worker-representative members of the Committee proposed that the survey should be widely disseminated among all interested parties and should be used in promotional activities. This dissemination is to take place in the second half of 1989, thanks to contributions by two member States of ILO.

182. During its examination of the observations communicated by employers' and workers' organizations, the Committee of Experts noted that some of these related to equality of opportunities and treatment free from sex discrimination (see tables 6 and 7). The Committee continued to stress its continuing interest in receiving from employers' and workers' organizations observations on the application of the international labour conventions. The Committee added that, in general, the submission of comments by employers' and workers' organizations under the usual ILO control system made it possible to examine particularly useful information and to avoid having frequent recourse to more formal and inflexible procedures of representations submitted under article 24 of the Constitution. During the period 1986-1989, no representations were submitted on matters of sex discrimination.

Table 6. Comments on sex discrimination received from employers' and workers' organizations

	1986	1987	1988	1989
Convention No. 100	13 (13)	1	12	-
Convention No. 111	1	6	3 (18)	9
Total	134	155	182	154

Source: APPL working paper (Geneva, ILO, 1989).

Note: The figures within brackets reflect comments on the occasion of the genral survey.

Table 7. Convention (No. 156) concerning workers with family responsibilities, 1981*

State	Ratification registered	State	Ratification registered
Argentina	17 March 1988	Portugal	2 May 1985
Finland	9 February 1983	San Marino	19 April 1988
France	16 March 1989	Spain	11 September 1985
Greece	10 June 1988	Sweden	11 August 1982
Netherlands	24 March 1988	Venezuela	27 November 1984
Niger	5 June 1985	Yemen	13 March 1989
Norway	22 June 1982	Yugoslavia	15 December 1987
Peru	16 June 1986		

*Entered into force on 11 August 1989.

3. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization conventions

183. By 20 June 1989, 77 member States had become parties to the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), a number unchanged since 1987. However, when consultations were organized to measure the progress achieved in eliminating obstacles to the education of girls and to their access to all types of education, and which also serve to remind member States of their obligations in this field, the replies received were always more numerous than the States bound by the Convention against Discrimination in Education. For example, 84 States took part in the fourth consultation (23 C/72 and 23 C/ Resolution 2.5 of the General Conference). The questionnaire for the fifth consultation is currently being prepared. As previously, it will contain specific questions on the existence of any discrimination and on the provisions made to promote equality of opportunity and equal treatment for girls and women in education.

184. With regard to the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, adopted by the Special Intergovernmental Conference on the Status of Teachers in 1966, a survey conducted among member States and international teachers' organizations concluded that there was no need to revise the text, but that it was preferable to continue to disseminate it, particularly in collaboration with ILO (24 C/16, para. 14). The four non-governmental organizations that represent the teaching profession will provide assistance for the regional or subregional workshops and seminars scheduled in the draft Programme and Budget for 1990-1991 to put the Recommendation into effect (UNESCO 25 C/15, p. 9, 1989).

185. "The Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (1976) applies to adults of both sexes but emphasizes the need to eliminate 'the isolation of women from adult education ... and ... activities, including those which provide training for qualifications leading to activities or responsibilities which have hitherto been reserved for men'. The fourth International Conference on Adult Education, held in Paris in 1985, drew the attention of UNESCO in particular to the special requirements of life-long education for women: in the draft Programme and Budget for 1990-1991, provision is made for the first consultation of member States concerning the application of this

Recommendation in order to make strategies for the development of education for adults, both men and women, more effective" (UNESCO 25C/15, p. 9, 1984).

B. Constitutional and legal equality

186. Of the 28 developing countries reporting on measures taken on constitutional and legal equality, about half say that they have achieved de jure equality. A few others indicate that inequality still exists in certain legal provisions, particularly those relating to property, family laws, employment legislation and application of laws. Several developing countries mention that they have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including some that have not yet achieved de jure equality, but recognize the obligation to reformulate and modify existing laws that discriminate against women.

187. Almost all of the developed countries (15 of 17 countries) state that a main issue is the achievement of de facto equality. Although many of them consider that they achieved de jure equality some time ago and continued during the Decade for Women to make efforts towards de facto equality, the achievement of de facto equality remains a major issue. Only one of the developed countries states that de jure equality has not been achieved.

188. Measures taken to strengthen national machinery are mentioned by a few developing countries as a means of reinforcing equality.

189. Several countries, both developing and developed, have adopted national plans of action for the advancement of women in recent years. Some of these call for the integration of gender equality into all government policies.

190. Several international non-governmental organizations report that the achievement of constitutional and legal equality is one of their declared priorities, both within their own organizations and in their efforts to mobilize Governments to undertake the necessary steps to institutionalize measures ensuring equality. Some non-governmental organizations have given wide publicity to the Convention.

1. Methods used to eliminate legal discrimination

191. Some countries report special institutional measures to eliminate de jure discrimination; for example, by establishing special committees on sex discrimination to review existing legislation and advise on measures to remove elements of discrimination based on gender. Several countries, developing as well as developed, have made amendments to or revisions of existing laws to ensure the rights of women, to improve the status of women or to eliminate discrimination particularly in the field of civil law, for example, marriage, inheritance and child care.

192. Measures to eliminate de facto discrimination through legal literacy programmes, legal assistance and counselling for women are mentioned by several countries. One developing country mentions that legal counselling before regional and supreme courts is provided free of charge for women.

193. Several of the developed countries have taken special measures. A few countries report on governmental assistance to facilitate the test cases in court that could advance equality. One developed country states that individuals who assert a right under human rights legislation benefit from the services of a human rights commission staff, investigators, lawyers and legal aid without charge and can also be assisted to pursue court cases of a constitu-

tional nature. One country mentions compliance of legal acts with the Constitution being supervised by a tribunal. Another country reports that assistance grants by the Government to companies are now tied to the compliance by the company with the Equal Treatment Act; furthermore if the Act is violated, women have the opportunity of applying to the Equality Commission.

194. A few countries maintain the importance of increasing support to research and relevant statistics on the life situation and standard of living of women and men, since these facts are very important tools in the development of official policies for equal status.

2. Special areas of discrimination in which legal measures have been taken

195. Several countries, mainly in Europe, Latin America and Asia emphasize the need for measures to prevent violence against women and children. Many countries, both developing and developed, report on reviews of legislation relating to sexual assaults and rape, and have strengthened provisions to prevent violence against women. A few developing countries mention the introduction of new national laws for the prevention of domestic violence. Some developing countries mention such measures as the elimination of articles lowering punishment for rape or other forms of violence in cases of "dishonest women"; revision of laws regarding adultery; permitting abortion for therapeutic or eugenic reasons, or in case of rape; and stricter penalization of violent behaviour in the family.

196. Some of the developed countries report on increased attention to the problems of domestic violence, including maltreatment of women and children, sexual abuse of children and sexual assaults on women. One country reports on amendments to the rules concerning prosecution for assault and rape, so that prosecution is no longer dependent on an accusation being made by the person subjected to the offence. This means that anyone who knows of a case of domestic violence can report it to the police, after which preliminary hearings can commence. By this measure, it has been established that such offences cannot be considered a private matter concerning only the parties involved.

197. Equal employment opportunity acts to eliminate discriminatory practices and to impose penalties in case of discriminatory retirement practices or dismissal have been adopted in a few of the developing countries. Labour laws are often said to take into consideration the ILO conventions regarding women's employment, including leave for sick children and the right to nurse infants.

198. Several developing countries report that there is equal pay for equal work. Many of the developed countries state that even though the principle of equal pay has long since been sanctioned by law, women still do not receive de facto equal pay for work of equal value. A few of these countries report on such measures as the allocation of additional resources to bolster efforts to implement equal pay, and a pay equity act requiring federally regulated larger companies to develop an employment equity plan and to report annually on the results. Also, all companies tendering on federal contracts worth $US 2,000 or more are required to commit themselves to the implementation of employment equity as a condition of their bid. One country mentions that the principle of equal pay was introduced in the 1940s, but despite this, de facto equal pay for work of equal value still does not exist. Another country considers the wage differences between sexes merely the result of the fact that women are often employed in lower qualified categories.

199. A few countries mention that studies have been undertaken to develop methods for the evaluation of work in order to eliminate de facto discrimination.

C. Equality in social participation

200. Many countries recognize that equal social participation requires an environment that supports and encourages a successful integration of work and family responsibilities. One strategy mentioned by some countries is based on the premise that social responsibilities should be shared equally by women and men.

201. Several developing countries report that, as a result of equal opportunity laws, both the equal treatment of the sexes and job opportunities for women have increased. Furthermore, fringe benefits, retirement age and training are provided. A few countries mention re-engagement schemes for women workers forcing employers to re-hire women who have resigned because of pregnancy or child care. One country reports on incentive benefits given to employers for re-engaging women. A few countries state that they have ratified all ILO conventions that affect the social status of women. Some countries mention bilateral agreements with other countries on the employment of accompanying spouses to employees in the foreign service.

202. Measures taken to eliminate de facto discrimination are varied. Legislative measures in some countries include new equal status acts to eliminate de facto discrimination, pay equity acts, equal opportunity acts, acts on equality of men and women in appointing members of public committees, equality committees to ensure equality in personnel policies, and equal treatment acts to ensure equal admission to public service through anonymous tests.

203. Some countries mention the active promotion of career advancement and managerial responsibilities for women. One country reports on a programme adopted by the Government with the objective of changing social and cultural patterns in the behaviour of men and changing the stereotyping of women's traditional roles.

204. A few non-governmental organizations state that they have emphasized leadership training, management and entrepreneurial skills training in order to enable women and girls to participate in social and political life at all levels.

1. Maternity leave and child care

205. Child-care-leave acts are mentioned by many countries as one of the most important measures taken or that can be taken towards achieving de facto equality. A legal right to maternity leave exists in almost all developed countries. In one developed country, law asserts the principle of both parents sharing the responsibility for the care of children.

206. A few developing countries report on provisions for maternity leave. Most of the developed countries provide maternity leave, with or without pay, varying from about 3 to 18 months. In several of the developed countries compensation is paid at the rate of the insurable earnings. In one country, this is 90 per cent of the gross income during the first 12 months. In some other countries, one parent has the right to take full or partial leave of absence without pay for up to four years for child care. In several countries the parental benefits also apply for the father of the child.

207. In many developing countries, however, qualifying conditions, such as belonging to social security schemes, often exclude a high proportion of working women.

2. Research and information dissemination

208. Most of the developed countries mention measures to disseminate information free of charge on women's rights and opportunities, as well as to support research on women's topics to enhance equality between men and women and to abolish sex stereotyping in the society. Public legal information on women's rights is provided by various government departments, legal aid centres and women's organizations. A few Governments have published comprehensive reports on the situation of women in order to provide information on trends, facts and problems relevant to women and to serve as a basis for further policy and programme development.

209. Many countries recognize the influential role played by the mass media in combating discrimination and stressing equality. Some countries report on active work to raise public awareness of sex-discriminatory advertising and negotiations held between representatives of authorities concerned with equal opportunity, consumer authorities, advertisers and other organizations to start a self-control process for the prevention of discriminatory advertising. Special information is disseminated to schools. Several countries have introduced women's studies at universities, and educational material and curricula are being reviewed with the aim of eliminating sex-role stereotyping. One country mentions the introduction of parent-education classes to encourage parents to foster mutual respect, understanding and co-operation in the family.

210. A few of the developed countries have elaborated a time-use survey proposal to measure unpaid work in the household and in the community. The data is expected to be useful in policy areas including divorce, labour market practice, child-care provision, social and health service provision, and income maintenance. Another country has supported development and promotion of a system of statistical indicators of the socio-economic status of women.

D. Equality in political participation

211. Globally, there is strong evidence that women are substantially underrepresented in politics and decision-making, as has been documented in reports presented to the Commission at its thirty-third (E/CN.6/1989/7) and thirty-fourth sessions. (E/CN.6/1990/2)

212. A few developed countries mention that the greatest success of the Forward-looking Strategies has been the establishment of constitutional and legal guarantees of equality and the appointment of women to key decision-making positions in government boards, commissions, high judicial offices, deputy ministry levels and diplomatic postings.

213. Most countries state that efforts have been made to increase the representation of women in politics, but only a few of the developed countries report on a substantial increase of women in decision-making positions during the past 10 years. In three of these countries, there are now more than 30 per cent women members of parliament, while a few other countries report on having reached a representation varying from about 5 to 15 per cent women.

214. Three of the developed countries that have the highest proportion of women in parliament stress that the increased representation of women is only

valid in positions in directly elected political bodies. These Governments are now paying more attention to the underrepresentation of women in indirectly elected bodies, and setting up special committees to review the question. These countries have already passed new laws requiring presentation of both a male and a female candidate for each seat to public committees. In one of these countries, the Equal Status Act requires a minimum of 40 per cent female representatives on all official committees, boards and delegations. Another country has set up in the plan of action for equality the goal of increasing women's participation to 40 per cent by 1995. If the intermediate goal of 30 per cent representation of women has not been achieved by 1992, legislation will be considered to enforce the achievement of the final goal of equal representation.

215. Some developing countries mention appointments of women ambassadors, and other countries report on training programmes for women for improving their management and leadership skills.

216. Many of the developing countries mention primarily participation of women in non-governmental organizations and international conferences, exchange visits and other international co-operative and development activities. A few countries express also the active support of Governments in promoting women's participation in international meetings, of both official and non-governmental organizations.

217. Several of the developed countries assert that efforts are being taken to increase women's participation in international affairs. Information from the few countries that reported more specifically on this subject reveals that the rates of women in diplomatic and consular service range between 3 and 13 per cent.

218. One of the developed countries states that all representatives at meetings of international organizations are assigned the responsibility of including the women's perspective in each area of concern. To achieve the goal of at least 40-per-cent representation of each sex on all official committees and boards, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, has to submit the lists of proposed members for all delegations to the national machinery before delegates are appointed. An explanation is required if the list of proposed delegates contains less than 50 per cent women. In order to find female candidates for positions in international organizations, the Ministry has contacted the national machinery and non-governmental organizations. This has led, in practice, to a more equal representation at international meetings. The last delegation of that country to the General Assembly consisted of 11 women and 14 men.

219. A few developed countries mention that the proportion of women among the trainees for the Foreign Service has risen to between 40 and 50 per cent, partly due to the special encouragement given to women to apply to this sector.

220. Some of the developed countries recognize the value of the active work of non-governmental organizations on issues related to peace and disarmament, nationally and internationally. Some of them receive government grants annually to support activities, information and education concerning efforts towards peace and disarmament.

221. A few of the developed countries affirm that efforts have been made to improve the official development aid policies and programmes to developing countries. Special attention has been given to integrating women's perspectives and to ensuring that benefits from development projects reach women.

Some countries mention increased voluntary contributions to the United Nations. In the national reports, both the developing and the developed countries recognize that promotion of women to decision-making positions in important areas of social life is identified as a problem. Even if various measures have been taken to get more women into decision-making positions, the progress is reported to be slow. This problem is often said to be associated with the slow improvement of women's overall social status, the educational system, poor facilities for child care and too few women employed in important sectors of the economy.

222. A few developing countries recognize that there are too few women in political and decision-making positions when compared to the high rate of women in the labour force. Some developing countries mention new goals to expand women's participation in society. Measures taken in this direction are, for example, governmental support for training women for political participation, training in decision-making, encouragement of women's participation both in national and international politics, and measures to ensure that women's political interests are represented.

223. One developing country reports on the promotion of an equitable representation of women in decision-making positions, and the application of a quota system on the recruitment of women to public administration. Another country mentions the establishment of women's development units in all the main ministries.

224. A few developing countries report on increased women's participation in trade unions, rural movements and other non-governmental organizations. One developing country mentions the establishment of an all-woman political party.

225. One developing country states that even if women's participation in decision-making is, at present, trivial, it can see the signs of progressive changes due to improved education for women and increased awareness of women's rights and women's role in the development of the country.

226. Some of the developed countries mention that as there has not been any significant increase of women in politics, the political parties are now discussing the introduction of quotas for more equal sex representation.

227. A few of the developed countries mention governmental support for research to study and identify the barriers for women to reach higher positions in employment.

228. One developed country says that even though it has tried to increase the ratio of female members in all national advisory councils, the proportion of women has increased only to 6.6 per cent in 1988 from 2.4 per cent in 1975. This country has set up a goal of 15 per cent women to be represented in national advisory councils by the year 2000.

229. One of the developed countries mentions that women are now holding 30 per cent of the senior posts throughout the federal Government, and several countries report an increasing number of women being appointed to high judicial offices, deputy minister levels and to diplomatic and United Nations postings.

230. Some non-governmental organizations report on research activities being undertaken on women and political participation, on equal access to training and education, and on the role of women in development, including the implications of laws on the status of women. Sexist attitudes in educational systems

and methods of training are also being identified as some of the obstacles to the increased participation of women.

E. Obstacles in the area of equality

1. Legal obstacles

231. Inequality in political participation is said by a few of the developed countries to be one of the greatest national concerns. The main obstacles mentioned for women are:

(a) Time constraints resulting from household duties, child-bearing and child rearing;

(b) Insufficient education in general and political education in particular;

(c) Women's reluctance to participate in politics, in particular high level politics; prevailing negative attitudes towards women's participation in public life; lack of confidence in and support for female candidates and politicians on the part of the electorate, including women; difficulty in combining a political career with a traditional role of women in the family and often in society; economic dependency or lack of financial means;

(d) Short historical tradition of political participation and lack of experience in campaigning, public debate, exposure to media.

232. Another obstacle, mentioned by several developed countries, is the uneven sharing of responsibilities for unpaid work at home, including the care of children. Some countries recognize a growing awareness of the fact that political work is often not compatible with the day-to-day responsibility for family and children. This has led to some political parties having started to provide child-minding facilities in connection with long meetings.

233. Still pending are the problems related to labour laws and their application. Similarly, there continues to be a need to review penal laws, especially those referring to the incrimination of adultery and to rape and sexual violence to minors. A few countries mention that even if they have de jure equality there are still other laws that contradict equality for women and that need to be identified and revised. Several countries mention the problem of women not being aware of the existing laws for equality. One country mentions also the time-lag between legislation and its implementation.

2. Obstacles to political and social participation

234. In the report submitted to the Commission at its thirty-third session on the priority theme for peace (E/CN.6/1989/7) it was noted that there are many reasons why women might not be elected to parliaments, but the most sure is that women are not, in most countries, put up as candidates for office. One reason that women are not put up as candidates is because they are not well-represented in the leadership of political parties. Indeed, in those countries where women do become candidates, they are more likely to be elected than men.

235. A few developing countries mention that the limited participation of women in labour unions, political parties and decision-making positions makes it difficult for women to control the means for improved living conditions.

This is said to depend upon traditional attitudes, customs, lifestyle, poor political training and the social structure.

236. Some non-governmental organizations mention that there still is inequality in sharing economic and political power, and although some political parties and organizations have introduced a quota system or other affirmative action measures, the resistance within the parties to implement positive action programmes is still great. Some of these organizations also mention that they have observed remaining obstacles to reaching equality in political participation and decision-making in non-governmental organizations that almost automatically lead to the underrepresentation of women in the areas of overall development, employment, trade, industry, and science and technology.

237. Unemployment, lack of adequate housing, health care and other areas are considered by one country to be a much more serious problem than de facto equality. The task of taking care of the family falls heavily on women, narrowing women's opportunities for social participation.

238. In the original World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, 15/ it is stated that the basic questions of equity and equality need to be settled sooner rather than later. If they are not, the benefits of peace and economic development will be unequally shared and, consciously or unconsciously, distributed according to outmoded hierarchies or unfair structures.

3. Cultural obstacles

239. Several countries stress the obstacle provided by a system of traditional cultural values, beliefs and patterns that contributes to the reassertion of existing inequality, assigning women to demeaning roles and a status that prohibits them from enjoying full and equal participation in society. The efforts to change the socio-cultural structure have been inadequate, but it is also recognized by some countries that this will take time. A few countries recognize that participation of women in management is much lower than women's participation in skilled employment. Some countries say that women are still regarded only as part of social welfare issues and family-planning programmes. There is concern, in many countries, that an upsurge in conservatism may lead to the maintenance or resuscitation of cultural practices that have been deemed inimical to women.

240. One trade union states that one reason for the lack of active participation of women in the work of non-governmental organizations, especially at the leadership level, is often due to the unequal sharing of family responsibilities and the inherent traditional management practices of organizations. A representative of another non-governmental organization said that young women are neglected in the third world because of the widespread gender bias against females. Girls are likely to be illiterate, malnourished, lack marketable skills for employment, and marry early and bear children, leading to a cycle of poverty.

V. DEVELOPMENT

241. About half of the developing countries returning the questionnaire mention an increased awareness of the importance of integrating women into socio-economic development. A new concept seems to be emerging of seeing women's participation as a key economic factor in the whole development process, and rather than pursuing special women's projects, many countries try to mainstream women into general development projects.

242. Several countries have adopted special national plans or strategies to achieve this goal. Some developing countries report on national plans of action, including a wide range of comprehensive measures, for example, special committees to ensure that women's concerns are taken care of in legislation; appointing and training equality advocates to act on discrimination in hiring; the promotion of women workers; and the provision of child care.

243. Only a very few countries say they have no specific agenda for women in development. Several developing countries mention that the Decade for Women has provided a great impetus to the socio-economic development of women.

244. Some of the developing countries report on rapid socio-economic changes experienced in recent years that have had far-reaching effects on the status of women in general: smaller families, higher age at marriage, liberalized laws to protect women's rights, increased economic opportunities, greater access to education and improved health.

245. Several developing countries report on measures taken to promote the integration of women into economic development. The most common measures emphasize income-generating activities by the provision of vocational training and education to facilitate the integration of women into the labour market. Several countries mention provision of courses on skills for entrepreneurship to promote self-employment. Some developing countries also mention training for women to improve leadership skills for management and decision-making training or training on a more professional level for women.

246. A few non-governmental organizations stress the view of equality and peace as prerequisites for development regarding women and society. Some non-governmental organizations report on work for the promotion of integrated and participative development for both sexes in rural and urban areas.

A. Employment

247. It is noted in the 1989 World Survey 2/ that while there is evidence that some women have improved their position through improved access to employment and more remunerated economic sectors, far more have become poor. Poverty among women is said to have increased, even within the richest countries, resulting in what has become known as the "feminization of poverty". 16/ It is also mentioned in the 1989 World Survey that there has been a shift in the female labour force away from the categories of own-account workers and employees, towards the category of unpaid family workers. 17/

248. In rural areas of developing countries, women's training usually focuses on activities related to the traditional sector, such as handicrafts, thereby further marginalizing women from mainstream economic development. In the modern sector, women are trained for a limited number of occupations that are often at the bottom level of the skill hierarchy and usually not inducive to occupational mobility.

249. According to the 1989 World Survey, interviews in Latin America have shown that women's wages, in most cases, account for 50 per cent of total family income. Even in families in which women are not in paid employment, the income that they generate by informal activities is often vital for the subsistence of their families, as is the case also in the African countries. Without the many, albeit unrecognized, contributions of these women, the economy would cease to function. 18/

250. In general, according to the national reports for the review and appraisal, employment among women is reported to have increased substantially during the last decade in all regions. In this respect, a few developing countries underline the importance of revising the legislation to ensure equal opportunities for work for women.

251. A few developing countries stress the value of non-governmental organizations and co-operatives to promote self-employment among women. One country mentions, for example, a women's co-operative that has formed capital financing bodies to procure loans and credits. In another country, the Government actively supports women's co-operatives with credit.

252. Special measures in the field of occupational health are mentioned only by a very few developing countries. Examples of measures in this area include the right to maternity leave, safer working conditions for women, and especially pregnant women, minimum wage, and establishment of occupational health and safety officers in larger industries.

253. Several of the developed countries report on having taken measures to improve the professional position of women and to overcome the segregated labour market. The projects have included, for example, encouragement of girls to choose non-traditional professions, provision of preparatory courses for girls who want technical jobs, special programmes for the advancement of women in public employment focusing on making technical sectors accessible to women and encouraging the promotion of women to leading posts. One country mentions that women who combine studies with a working career receive social privileges.

254. Some of the developed countries mention special labour market policies and programmes for women. These programmes include motivation of women in respect to careers, financial assistance for training courses, ensuring women's access to specialized and advanced training, promotion of women's initiatives, creating jobs and improvement of the availability of child-care facilities.

255. In some developed countries, efforts have been concentrated on equal remuneration for equal work. One country reports that parliament must make a biannual report on the measures taken in the State public administration to ensure the application of the principle of sex equality, but very few enterprises in the private sector have voluntarily applied the professional equality plan. A few countries stress training and counselling service for women who want to return to work.

256. Some of the non-governmental organizations mention that conventions and labour standards have been adopted in many countries through the active involvement of trade unions. They are also engaged in research and evaluation exercises to monitor that equal pay for work of equal value is embodied in agreements and legislation.

257. A few non-governmental organizations mention also having been engaged in training, research and information activities for their members in predominantly "male" occupations. Workshops have been organized to promote opportunities to develop self-help programmes for young women, and guidance and financial support have been given to unemployed youth.

B. Health

258. According to the 1989 World Survey, statistics from Latin American countries, which information is fairly reliable, indicate that the declining

maternal mortality rates continued throughout the period 1977-1984. Economic slow-down might later have had an effect on maternal mortality, but no definitive and clear-cut conclusion may be drawn from available statistics. 19/ The 1989 World Survey also points out that the mortality rate of infants and children under the age of five has declined steadily in the period 1950-1980. However, the rate of decline has slowed noticeably since 1980, but excess female mortality seems more widespread among children aged from one to four years. 20/

259. Other studies, including those by the World Health Organization (WHO), indicate that the health problems caused by traditional practices, such as female circumcision, persist. In the report of the Secretary-General on the effects of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) on the advancement of women (E/CN.6/1989/6/Add.1), the link between female circumcision and being infected by the AIDS virus by women is noted.

260. In the national reports, several developing countries assert the importance of improving the health status of women and children. Of primary concern is the high maternal and infant mortality rates.

261. Many developing countries report on improved measures, especially in the field of preventive health, including sanitation, nutrition, water and health education programmes. A few countries mention the provision of training of traditional birth attendants. One developing country points out that provision is made of legal, medical and social counselling to women in need.

262. Some more substantial health achievements are reported from a few developing countries, especially decreased infant and maternal mortality rates. One developing country mentions a decrease in the infant mortality rate from 64/1000 to 24/1000 during the period 1972-1987. Statistics on maternal mortality in developing countries are not often available, which to some extent reflects a lack of medical attention at childbirth.

263. Family-planning programmes seem to be receiving much attention in most of the developing countries according to the responses to the questionnaire. Many of them also report on successful programmes or on the extension and modernization of population programmes. A few countries mention that they have introduced family-life education in schools.

264. A few of the developed countries mention measures taken to improve the provision of health care to better meet the needs of women, particularly among more vulnerable groups such as the elderly. One country reports having new health and welfare plans that contain about 100 initiatives. Another country mentions a study showing that men and women have different patterns of illnesses and believe that such differences are significant when assigning priorities in health policies.

265. A few non-governmental organizations mention promotion of health education, participation in immunization and information campaigns on primary health care. They also report having undertaken workshops and symposia on family planning and genetic engineering.

266. One representative of a non-governmental organization mentions management training programmes conducted for professionals in developing countries in health, and family planning to help both men and women managers to use limited resources efficiently, to extend services to neglected groups of the population and to strengthen the institutional capacities of local groups. A

strong network of trained managers in the developing world has been created in the field of population activities.

C. Education

267. It is noted in the 1989 World Survey that improvements in the educational situation in general have slowed or stopped on a global basis, as was noted in chapter I. 21/

268. In the national reports, many developing countries report on high achievements in education both in general as well as specifically for girls. A few developing countries stress their achievements in having established compulsory education for both girls and boys. Illiteracy is still high in a few countries, but it is said to be improving. One country mentions projects trying to sensitize parents to girls' right to education. In general, the education of girls is said to have increased substantially, and a greater proportion of women are working in the formal sector as well as receiving training for employment.

269. Many developing countries report having established or expanded functional literacy programmes for adults, and especially for rural women. These programmes focus at the same time on education in the fields of health, nutrition and home economics. Some of these programmes are carried out in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other international organizations. A few developing countries underline the significant role of radio, television and videos in raising the level of education of rural women.

270. A number of countries mention the introduction of educational programmes with the objective of both parents sharing parental and family responsibilities. A few developing countries mention the establishment of special courses on women's issues in colleges and universities.

271. A number of countries report on measures taken to promote education and training for women in non-traditional areas such as high technology. Other measures mentioned were various training projects in new technologies and marketing techniques to enable women to gain economic independence.

272. A few of the developed countries mention that much effort has been concentrated in the area of education to ensure that young girls pursue programmes of higher education and to incorporate perspectives relevant to women into the educational programmes at all levels. One country reports on efforts made to recruit more women to top positions in school administration.

273. A few non-governmental organizations report on the implementation of participatory integrated development projects with women and assistance to national centres organizing training programmes for women workers, and production of a Development Kit to support development education programmes.

274. Several non-governmental organizations mention provision of training in leadership and income-generating skills to prepare women and girls for social and political participation in both rural and urban areas. Educational programmes to reduce the high rate of illiteracy and rehabilitation programmes for school drop-outs are sponsored by a number of non-governmental organizations. Seminars and workshops for project planning, management, communications and income-generating activities have been organized for middle- and top-level women to improve the situation of women generally and to influence policy-making.

D. Food, water and agriculture

275. It is reported in the 1989 World Survey that there is a growing concern to support women in their role of agricultural producers by substantial activities in contrast to developing small-scale, non-sustainable and insignificant projects often separate from primary development projects or programmes for women. There is increasing recognition of the need to integrate women into mainstream agricultural development, 22/ although the extent to which this is being put into effect is still modest. This recognition is essential if the full potential of the whole agricultural labour force, both male and female, is to be fully used to maximize output.

276. Attempts by most national machinery to implement food and agricultural development programmes and projects for rural women have generally met with very modest success. The main reasons are insufficient human and financial resources, the lack of a country-wide network of regional or local branches and a lack of technical expertise. This results in low status among other governmental agencies and reinforces the isolation of separate women's units from the programmes and field activities of the sectoral ministries. The result has been for such national machinery to design and implement a series of small income-generating projects, mainly in crafts, vegetable gardens and small livestock production, that are seen as the main activities for rural women. They fail to address women's need for assistance with their primary agricultural responsibilities in food and cash-crop production. However, programming and implementation of agricultural projects are mostly effectively carried out by ministries of agriculture assisted and monitored by special women's units or focal points. The importance of adopting empowerment rather than welfare strategies for rural women is also emphasized.

277. It is also pointed out in the 1989 World Survey that women's groups tend to suffer, on all levels, from a lack of training in management skills, financial resources and skilled human resources. 23/

278. In the national reports, several developing countries report on different development projects undertaken in the rural areas with the objectives of improving women's situation socially and economically. A few countries say that Governments are now recognizing that women's work in rural areas is not valued enough. Women are recognized to be the key factor not only as food producers, but also in food processing, in food trading and in handicraft production.

279. Development projects focusing on social conditions include most often measures to improve nutritional and health status, including water and sanitation projects. Functional literacy programmes carried out in rural areas often include some training of the more specific skills needed to accelerate the development process.

280. Development projects with emphasis on improving the economic situation for rural women have included specific measures to establish an infrastructure for income-generating activities or to increase effectiveness in agriculture and food processing, training in home economics, trade, marketing and management.

281. A few developing countries have made efforts to develop small-scale industries in rural areas in order for women to be gainfully employed.

282. Several developed countries report on several projects undertaken in rural areas to create alternative jobs for women or jobs that can be combined with agricultural work. The projects include support for women's co-operatives and training to enable them to create their own enterprises. Special courses in agriculture, milk production, maintenance of machinery, tractor driving and economics are provided specifically for women. Some countries assert that, as a general principle, all education, health, family planning and social security policies, legislation and all other provisions apply equally to women in rural and urban areas.

283. One developed country mentions that the major problems rural women are facing are isolation, inadequate access to service and credit, unequal participation in decision-making and economic inequality. The fact that women play a significant role in the agricultural economy is increasingly recognized and documented. Efforts have accordingly been made to increase the number of women in senior positions in government departments concerned with issues pertaining to rural women.

284. A few non-governmental organizations mention co-operation with United Nations bodies in projects to train women in rural areas to form women's organizations and to create safe and accessible water supplies. They also report on efforts to educate and support women to become independent farmers; projects undertaken including legal counselling for women in rural areas, education of trainers for rural self-help groups and distribution of educational material on funding, food and health, water, sanitation and on basic skills in management, financial and commercial experience. Also, workshops for management training in the fields of agriculture, food science, food processing and technical education have been organized, especially in developing countries.

E. Industry

285. It is stated in the 1989 World Survey that women's entry into the industrial labour force has had both positive and negative effects on women. On the positive side, industrial employment offers women an entry into paid employment and, at times, greater bargaining power and entitlement to familial and societal resources. On the negative side, the majority of female industrial workers are employed in occupations that are ill-paid and repetitive and that have poor career prospects. 24/ Moreover, a vast number of women have found employment in industrial sectors that are being automated. Only a few industries, such as electronics, food-processing and textiles, have actively sought and recruited women workers for unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. These jobs require little training, and hence those industries can rely on a workforce that has the image of being prone to a high turnover. The share of women in management and highly skilled occupations has remained insignificant.

286. There are indications that manufacturing outwork is increasing in both developed and developing countries. According to the 1989 World Survey, women make up the bulk of these home-based workers, mainly because domestic piecework is a way of combining unpaid household work and child care with remunerated labour. Women receive little protection and few benefits as wage-earners, either as outworkers or as employees of small units. 25/

287. In the national reports, a few developing countries report that they have established national training programmes for women entrepreneurs to encourage private enterprises and self-employment. A few countries mention provision of small credit schemes without interest or collateral, or loans repayable in easy instalments for low-income groups, in collaboration with national

machinery, commercial banks and co-operatives. One developing country mentions the establishment of a special women's bank to facilitate access to credit.

288. Several developing countries mention that they have taken measures to develop agro-based small-scale industries. One country encourages broadening the base of ownership by supporting private enterprises, including corporations, co-operatives and other collective organizations. Another country encourages women into the manufacturing, electronics and food industries.

289. Several of the developed countries state that they have taken special measures to expand the occupational range for women, including the reservation of places for women in training programmes in non-traditional fields and for higher paid occupations. One country reports on the planning of positive action for women in industry. Another country says that it did not have any particular policy for women in this field.

F. Trade and commerce

290. The high proportion of women working in the services sector has been universally recognized. In the 1989 World Survey, it is reported that according to statistics compiled by ILO in developed countries, and in Latin America and the Caribbean, the services sector accounts for 60-80 per cent of the total female labour force. 26/ Although many female workers are still employed in agriculture, the service sector is already the largest employer of female workers in Asia; in Africa, women engaged in it outnumber those in industry by three to one. Studies on female employment attribute this situation to the following: women have easy access to some service occupations, especially those requiring no special skills; certain service occupations are traditionally conceived of as women's work; men's domination of some areas of the manufacturing sector; and the heavy dependence of the service sector on part-time employment.

291. In the 1989 World Survey it is pointed out that despite the low levels of income, vulnerability of jobs and unsupportable conditions of work, women seem to be entering the informal sector in increasing numbers. Demographic pressure and diminishing opportunities in agriculture have no doubt played an important role. Perhaps a more important factor motivating many women to seek opportunities in the informal sector has been the constraints imposed on them by domestic cares and the bearing and rearing of children, and that increasing numbers of women in developing countries are responsible for supporting their children, partly because men are contributing little or nothing to the household income.

292. In the national reports, many developing countries report the provision of economic and technical assistance to women to generate enterprises and promote agricultural development. This often includes measures for easier access to bank loans, funds and grants. One country mentions policies of a more liberalized economy, for example, decreasing the control of fixed prices and lessening the tax burden.

293. One developed country mentions that the number of women entering the category of self-employed has risen three times as quickly as the number of self-employed men. Women are said to constitute over 27 per cent of business owners, primarily in the service and retail sectors. That country also mentions that the governmental bank and provincial governments offer financial and credit services, training and planning services and innovative programmes and conferences to encourage entrepreneurship and informal networks among women.

G. Science and technology

294. It is stated in the 1989 World Survey that in the emerging industrial global restructuring, the comparative advantages of national economies will no longer be determined by natural endowments of raw materials and labour, but will be primarily based on technology. As manual skills and physical strength decline in importance, a country can improve its competitiveness by enhancing and more fully utilizing the cognitive skills of its female work-force. Creating opportunities for women will be a prudent policy, not only on the grounds of equity, but also for economic growth. 27/

295. The steady supply of personnel trained in the use and management of information technology is a vital condition for strengthening the manufacturing and trading base of developing countries, and is currently particularly important for industrializing countries.

296. It is mentioned in the 1989 World Survey that experiences of the negative impact of technological change for women is not necessarily inherent in the technologies being introduced. The main cause is often insufficient support systems to enable women to benefit and make use of those technologies. Women are also disadvantaged since they are often excluded from new opportunities created because of lack of training to obtain the required knowledge and skills or lack of access to capital. 28/

297. A few developing countries mention measures to increase women's participation through the implementation of consciousness-raising education on equality between the sexes by the revision of school curricula and by the promotion of equal opportunities in vocational training. Some countries state that there are few women in this field because of traditional attitudes against women studying science and technology. One developing country states that they have strengthened the governmental machinery for development of science and technology for women.

298. Some of the developed countries mention support to research studies and demonstration projects that will broaden the understanding of technological change. Women's non-governmental organizations are given priority for funding under this programme. Another country provides scholarships to encourage women to undertake postgraduate studies in science and technology.

299. Several non-governmental organizations report on support through scholarships to women pursuing graduate studies in aerospace-related science and engineering. They also promote women's full integration and involvement in technological research programmes and energy aspects of food and agricultural development.

H. Communications

300. A few developing countries mention that the national machinery is often the key factor in disseminating information, organizing workshops and seminars, publicizing newsletters, research summaries etc. on women's issues to raise consciousness and eliminate stereotypes of women. Workshops for psycho-social assistance to women, family education, motivation, self-respect and leadership have been organized in a few developing countries.

301. Some developing countries mention the use of the media to promote equal opportunities for women at work and to achieve women's participation in decision-making. One country mentions the distribution of films on equality,

produced by ILO, and films on sexual education of children and family life, produced by ministries.

302. A few developing countries emphasize the positive use of mass media, radio and especially television, to discuss women in development. Special television campaigns for equity, equal pay, minority women, abused women, and against war toys for children have been produced in some countries.

303. Several developing countries state that they have established training courses for people working in the media to change visual images of attitudes towards women. One of the developing countries mentions training women in the production of audio-visual cassettes; another mentions production of audio-visual educational materials and the organization of the first film forum on women and the establishment of awards to women who do distinguish work in communications. A few developing countries say they have plans to increase women's participation in committees on communications.

304. Two of the developed countries report that the representation of women in management has increased to 26 per cent in the field of national broadcasting. A few of the developed countries say that their Governments are aiming to enhance the participation of women in creative and managerial capacities in the cultural sector. One developed country states that employment equity has been implemented in the National Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board.

305. A few countries mention the establishment of regulations on programmes abusive to women with guidelines to eliminate sex stereotyping in communications material. A National Film Board is said to have provided a forum for female film makers to bring women's perspectives into the media, provide practical training for women and respond to current community needs in the choice of films produced. Another country says it is addressing key policies in the restructuring of broadcasting.

I. Housing, settlement, community development and transport

306. Several of the developing countries mention planning projects providing low-cost housing to poor families and multiple purpose centres, or provision of loans for low-income persons, often women and young families. One country mentions plans to encourage the provision of fiscal and tax incentives to encourage the private sector to produce low-income housing.

307. One developing country reports on the adoption of development plans that aim at enhancing the role of women in housing in relation to policy, housing production, finance and estate management. The training of women in construction, housing and maintenance are part of this strategy.

308. A few of the developed countries mention specific governmental programmes to assist poorer people who are not able to afford suitable and adequate housing on the private market. Women have been increasingly able to benefit from these social housing programmes. One of the developed countries has encouraged the enrolment of women in architectural and engineering fields, and has appointed women as co-ordinators in technical schools and institutes.

309. One non-governmental organization reports on contributions to the redevelopment of inner city areas through projects and studies on housing and women. It has also advocated that more women should be appointed to town and city planning, and construction authorities and committees.

J. Energy

310. According to the 1989 World Survey many of women's income-earning activities depend on adequate supplies of fuel and biomass energy. Some of the energy-intensive small industries are food processing, beer brewing, fish smoking, pottery and brick-making. New approaches have been tried that place improved stoves in the wider context of household fuel planning and cooking efficiency. Moreover, it is increasingly recognized that energy concepts and projects must be integrated into rural development programmes and that women's roles and needs in relation to energy resources must be viewed in a broader context. 29/

311. Some developing countries mention the establishment of demonstration centres for educating women on the use of energy conservation and simple technology, such as biogas and solar energy. One country states that the situation of women and girls as providers and consumers of energy has improved with the shift to alternative energy sources. Another country says that there were no major policies or measures specifically for women in the field of energy; however, its action plan is believed to have encouraged women's participation in community power associations.

312. One of the developed countries says that energy programmes are not differentiated by gender; however, special efforts have been made to encourage women to enter non-traditional occupations in the energy sector. Another country mentions that it has begun a new review of resource management law, in which the national machinery is involved to ensure that future processes and frameworks for decision-making are responsive and accessible to women.

K. Environment

313. According to the 1989 World Survey, it is now recognized that the collection of firewood in rural areas is not a major cause of deforestation. The main causes are large-scale lumbering, agricultural expansion, over-use of existing agricultural land, burning forests to encourage fodder growth and over-grazing. Rapid urban growth also puts pressure on land. Agro-forestry has proved to be a promising approach by its integration of agriculture with forestry in order to produce outputs for sale, food and fuelwood. Forestry programmes have begun to emphasize gender issues as important for their success.

314. In the 1989 World Survey it is mentioned that women have been especially hard hit by drought and desertification. They have been left to cultivate crops on the less fertile land and frequently have to compensate for declining yields by cultivating much larger areas of marginal land. The increased work-load has shortened the time available for collecting fuel and water to meet their families' basic needs. 30/

315. Several developing countries mention the measures taken to increase the supply of water and improve sanitation. One country has set up a goal of providing water and sanitation to 90 per cent of the urban population. Another country has adopted programmes involving women against deforestation. Two countries say that there is growing interest in environmental issues, and mention also the important role of the work of non-governmental organizations in this area.

316. One country states that although there is no specific major policy for women on environmental issues, they recognize that non-governmental organizations are involved in environmental protection activities such as sanitation

and water supply programmes. Rural women are said to have been integrated into the implementation of energy conservation such as utilization of agri-waste or biomass as sources of energy for household consumption and as income-generating activities.

317. One of the developed countries says that the environmental policies are not differentiated by gender. However, in ecological studies special attention is paid to the most susceptible groups.

L. Social services

318. Policies to develop social services that aim at easing the double burden of women, at home and at work, are reported to have been implemented in several developing countries. A number of countries state that the welfare of the family is an object of prime interest. Measures mentioned include provision of material and monetary aid for the protection of children, mothers, disabled and old people. One developing country reports on the adoption of more advanced social security measures that cover sickness, maternity leave, unemployment, occupational illness, disability and old age.

319. Several countries assert that the provision of child care is of high priority and some report on substantial contributions to provide affordable and quality child-care facilities to meet the growing demand. One developing country mentions that considerable progress has been made to assure the constitutional right to establish day nurseries for the age group 0-6 years (and also the universal right to education). Some countries mention cash subsidies to employers who provide child care, and others mention support for a wider use of flexible working hours.

M. Remaining obstacles

320. According to the 1989 World Survey, in spite of the growth of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in recent years, there are several obstacles on the path to the progress of rural women: the lack of access to land and other factors of production, particularly credit, marketing and co-operatives, and to political institutions at the local and national levels; and the absence, or lack of implementation, of legal provisions protecting their civil and economic rights. 31/

321. Policies designed to achieve balanced rural development fail, often because of the absence of reliable statistics on the role of women in the economy. Land reform and settlement programmes often vest the property of land on the heads of household who, in most societies, are reported to be male spouses. The Green Revolution has often changed women's employment patterns for the worse, increasing their seasonality, and excluding women from skilled employment. Drought and desertification have borne especially hard on women, particularly in Africa where they have been assigned land of lower productivity and have had to collect fuelwood from farther away from their homes. The development of industries and urban areas and the crisis of small agriculture has increased the migration of males away from their homes, and has left women in charge of the farm work.

322. Women-only projects have generally been under-funded and have enjoyed limited institutional support. Mainstream projects have seldom taken the interests of women into account and, as has been the case with many land reform and resettlement projects, they have sometimes worked to women's detriment.

1. Economic and infrastructural obstacles

323. Several developing countries state that the predominant obstacles are the basic socio-economic problems including high level of poverty and lack of employment opportunities, institutional weakness, poor health conditions, low educational level, high levels of illiteracy, women's ignorance of their rights, traditional attitudes and social customs, lack of understanding of the concept of women in development, limited facilities of technical and vocational training, and the economic crisis.

324. One country stresses the importance of women's control of productive resources, as for example, accessibility to credits, loans, proximity of banking services, management capabilities, entrepreneurial skills, decision-making and capabilities of influencing policies.

325. Several developing countries assert that international factors are causing a decline in the standard of living. The debt burden is mentioned by many countries to have had a detrimental affect on the socio-economic development process in general, but especially women are said to suffer the most from the extra burden of falling employment opportunities. Conditions on funds of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stipulating restrictions on public spending are said to cause bad results especially on education.

326. Several countries state that one of the main obstacles is the low educational level, the high levels of illiteracy or semi-literacy.

327. One country considers women's participation in the socio-economic development as marginal because of discriminatory legislation, lack of good marketing networks, lack of appropriate skills, lack of aggressiveness, lack of direction in the establishment of grass-root industries, and lack of qualified staff and training centres.

328. Also women's ignorance of legal rights and development facilities, because of a low level of education and poor communication, among other factors, are mentioned as obstacles.

329. Lack of statistics on women's input in agriculture as well as women's work in general do not reflect the value of women's work.

330. One international confederation of trade unions says that the majority of working women still face discrimination in the labour market and women are concentrated in a small number of sectors and occupations, in low-paying jobs or in the informal and agricultural sector doing unremunerated work. The nature of female labour is said to be a result of the combination of women's three social functions: motherhood, professional work and the practice of their equal rights as citizens. The lack of active participation of women in all aspects of the society is often said to be due to the unequal sharing of family responsibilities and the structure of organizations. The unwillingness of employers to discuss equal pay, positive action, child care, parental leave etc. are mentioned as a major barrier to the elimination of discriminatory practices.

2. Tradition

331. Traditional customs, sex roles and cultural prejudices are cited by many countries as being among the greatest obstacles to women's full participation in the development process. Reluctance of people to send their daughters to school due to the custom of early marriage is mentioned by one country.

Another country says that co-operative participation is considered to be a male activity and that traditional attitudes are against women entrepreneurs. Laws and regulations prejudicial to women's interest hinder women from getting administrative jobs.

332. Several developing countries say that the obstacles to the realization of the principle of equal opportunity for women and men are due to deep-rooted subtle traditional attitudes, social awareness and stereotypes that pervade the whole society. Indicators of this are lower pay for typical "women's work", gender bias in career choices, limited mobility to managerial positions and a low level of consciousness of women's concerns, not the least among those who are supposed to implement policies in favour of equality. Increased participation of women in management is much slower than their participation in highly skilled professions and employment. One country mentions that there is also a tendency for occupations that are well paid to decrease in pay level on the entrance of women.

333. A number of countries recognize that women because of heavy domestic burdens, do not have the time to participate in training and literacy programmes or participate in politics. Another problem asserted by several countries is the insufficient organization of women.

334. Women's reproduction functions, childbirth and child care, are stated by a few countries to be an obstacle for women, making it more difficult for women to obtain a job.

335. Sex-segregated labour markets are mentioned by a few developing and developed countries as an obstacle to development.

336. Some non-governmental organizations mention that sexual harassment in the work-place is still a problem for working women.

337. Access of rural women to power-structures and decision-making, and to male-dominated organizations is practically non-existent. They are also excluded from agrarian reform measures. One non-governmental organization mentions the problems of some development workers for rural women, who are often concentrated in cities, intervening without having any knowledge of the real conditions of life of rural women, their traditional activities or the technologies they use.

3. Health and other obstacles

338. A few countries declare that the poor health and social conditions, and particularly the high rates of maternal mortality are another obstacle to women's development.

339. One country mentions the lack of or poor transport facilities and lack of telephones as a major constraint to women's advancement.

340. One country points out that even if a country has a national socio-economic plan, half of the rural women do not benefit from it. Therefore, specific projects have to be established to increase the integration of rural women in the development process.

341. Some non-governmental organizations mention that they have intensified their assistance to national centres organizing training programmes for women workers, including training of women educators and leaders.

342. Many developing countries state that one of the main obstacles is posed by the debt burden, which reduces resources available for social development. In one country fewer women have been able to enter the labour market because the public sector, which employs most of the women, has stopped recruitment. The increased competition on the labour market is thought to have increased hostility against female employment. One country asserts that the severe socio-economic and political crisis tends to spread conservative views threatening the implementation of the Strategies. The priorities in the implementation of the programme for overcoming the economic crisis coincide with the priorities of the Forward-looking Strategies. A contributing factor to the crisis is the country's indebtedness, which directly affects the social status of women, thus making it more difficult for young women to find jobs.

VI. PEACE

A. Participation in peace activities

343. Few data have been collected on the participation of women in decision-making processes at the international level. However, some data have been presented to the Commission at its thirty-fourth ession on equality in political participation and decision-making (E/CN.6/1990/2) and on women in situations of armed conflict (E/CN.6/1990/4). In addition, information collected by the Division for the Advancement of Women as part of a longer term project in the context of the preparation of future priority themes also indicates levels of participation.

344. One example of the lack of participation is the thirty-ninth and fourtieth rounds of the Talks on Mutual Reduction of Armed Forces and Armaments and Associated Measures in Central Europe, which were held at Vienna, Austria. Between 1975 and 1986, there were only 10 women in the 19 delegations to the Talks, nearly all of whom participated only at the end of the period (5 women out of a total of 92 delegates or 5%). However, the women who did participate often held important rank and their impact may have been greater than their number.

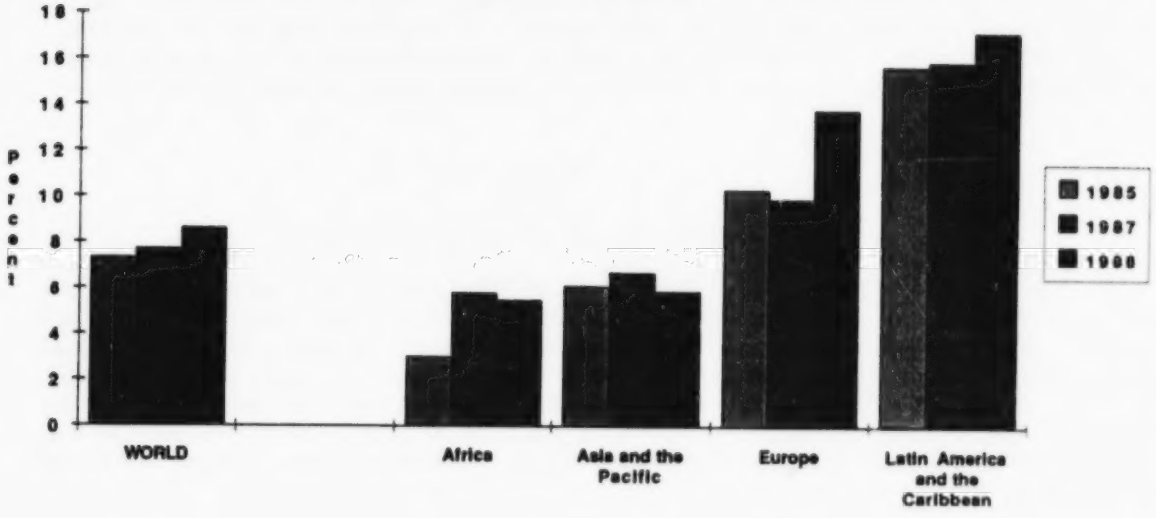
345. Women were not equally represented in the permanent missions to the United Nations in 1989. Out of a total of 1,689 representatives for 159 delegations, only 337 were women (20%); 57 delegations (36%) listed no women members. There were significant regional differences with the Latin America and Caribbean region having the highest percentage of women delegates: an average of 39 per cent, with several of these countries with over 50 per cent women representatives. Countries of the Western European and Others group had 26 per cent women representatives; Africa, 15 per cent; Asia and the Pacific, 12 per cent; and Eastern Europe, 4 per cent.

346. The gender composition of delegations in the First Committee of the General Assembly in 1985, 1987 and 1988 is of interest since the First Committee deals with disarmament and international security. It is a forum for interaction and decision-making on peace, all countries, including 45 in Africa; 26 in Latin America; 43 in Asia and the Pacific; 23 in Western Europe and Other (which includes Australia, New Zealand and North America); and 8 countries in Eastern Europe.

347. The numerical representation of women on the First Committee (see figure VII) does not reflect the importance that women accord to the subject of peace and the increasing interest and expertise that women have in this area. The total female participation at all levels for the period 1985-1988

is a mere 7.9 per cent. Even the region with the best record of female participation (Latin Americain and the Caribbean) has only 16.3 per cent females.

Figure VII. Composition of delegations to the First (Political and Security) Committee of the General Assembly, by sex, 1985-1988



348. At the international level, patterns are similar to those of the participation of women in national decision-making: the areas of defence have the lowest participation of women, the economic areas a slightly higher participation and the more general areas, the highest participation, but still very unequal.

349. Less than one third of the developing countries providing national reports indicate specific measures taken for increasing women's active participation in the area of peace. Some of these countries mention support for the distribution of information on peace matters and the encouragement of activities that promote women's participation in the area of peace. A few other developing countries recognize the active participation of women's groups in international peace promotion by participation in international conferences and gatherings on peace and security, disarmament, international solidarity, against nuclear weapons and more specific peace co-operation with neighbouring countries.

350. A few developing countries mention the efforts of the national machinery for co-ordinating efforts together with women's international organizations directed towards peace and international solidarity. One country reports that the national women's organizations in two countries at war signed a peace agreement with each other. Another country reports on the increasing importance women have gained in the area of peace since they actively participated in a movement for a peace zone proposal (now signed by over 100 countries). This has led to a growing awareness and the increased participation of women in efforts for peace.

351. Several of the developed countries report on women's participation in the area of peace. A few of these countries report an increase in women representatives to international gatherings in the area of arms control.

Further, they mention efforts made by Governments to increase the number of nominations of women to senior positions in international organizations.

352. Several of the developed countries report on the recognition of the valuable work of non-governmental organizations on issues related to peace and disarmament, nationally and internationally. Some report on activities such as peace marches, national and international congresses, often organized by non-governmental organizations in which women are very strong. Many of these groups also support policies in favour of developing countries, and co-operate with women's organizations in South Africa, Central America and Palestine. Several Governments mention their active support to non-governmental organizations by annual financial assistance to support activities concerning peace. One country mentions that women comprise one third of the non-governmental consultative group that interacts with the Government on arms control and disarmament.

353. Some non-governmental organizations state that working for peace is of high priority, and a number of them mention work with and for refugees. One non-governmental organization mentions the establishment of a fund for legal aid to children in crisis, for example due to apartheid. Other non-governmental organizations mention having worked together towards peace in the Middle East. Some non-governmental organizations report on the promotion of peace among their members through international and regional co-operation, exchange programmes and solidarity networks focusing on the role of women working for peace, especially in third world countries.

B. Education for peace

354. Education for peace is the aspect of peace most reflected in the national reports. More than half of the developing countries report on some measures taken to increase the awareness of the value of peace promotion. Measures mentioned, among others, are the dissemination of information on peace-related issues, promotion of disarmament and human rights, support for opportunities for full participation, support to conferences and seminars, and publicity campaigns on peace education.

355. A few developing countries mention that peace issues are integrated in the social studies curriculum in schools, including such subjects as tolerance, racial and sexual equality, and respect and understanding for others. One country mentions peace education for children on proletarian values and on international co-operation. One developing country mentions the Government's recognition of the importance of introducing the concept of peace to be part and parcel of children's upbringing, and says that measures have been taken to include practical law as a subject in school curricula.

356. Some of the developing countries mention the growing consciousness among women of the significant role they can play in peace promotion. One country mentions the role of the national machinery for co-ordination of action against racial discrimination and apartheid, especially in South Africa and Palestine. Women's organizations have started many projects and movements to foster peace in the family, neighbourhood and community. One country mentions publicity campaigns and a national movement created for the development of education for peace, with special concern for children.

357. Several developed countries mention that education for peace is reflected in the field of culture through the education programmes and school handbooks. One country says that both the compulsory school curriculum and the upper secondary school underline the importance of international affairs in

teaching. A few countries report that the subject of conflicts and their resolution is applied not only to matters of defence and peace, law and justice or religion and ideology, but also to all subjects and class committee proceedings and in other contexts where the relations between human beings are discussed. The objective is to help pupils to understand how conflicts can arise and how they can be resolved, and that teaching must be aimed at strengthening respect for fundamental human rights and liberties, as well as creating a disposition to strive for peace and an understanding of the necessity of international solidarity. Some countries report having produced special educational material on peace issues.

358. A few of the developed countries mention special working groups established by their Governments composed of representatives from various ministries and non-governmental organizations to stimulate and disseminate information on peace and disarmament. Peace education is also mentioned as one of the basic aims of the activities of women's non-governmental organizations. One country maintains that the most important role in peace education is played by the family.

359. Several developed countries report on governmental establishments of peace research institutes. Other countries mention the provision of funds directed towards research and information on peace efforts within the United Nations framework, or to research pertaining to women in international, regional and national institutions.

360. Some countries mention the regular dissemination of information on United Nations activities and on the work of the Conference on Security in Central Europe (CSCE) by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

C. Violence against women

361. It is suggested in the 1989 World Survey that poverty and insecurity caused by agricultural or industrial displacement, by unemployment, underemployment or bad working conditions, and by rising costs that may follow economic adjustment policies, are possible factors in increasing domestic violence. 32/

362. Further, women's low status and economic dependence are factors in their subjection to sexual harassment, rape, incest and domestic violence. Like political repression and reaction, such physical violence is based on stereotypes of power and dominance, of worth and worthlessness, in other words, of inequality.

363. In their national reports, half of the developing countries mention the problem of violence against women. Most of these countries report that the topic of abused women is of national priority. Several developing countries state that both the Government and non-governmental organizations have taken increased interest in gender-based violence. A few countries have adopted national programmes for prevention of violence and assistance to victims of domestic violence.

364. Measures taken are mainly for the immediate protection and assistance to abused women, such as provision of shelters, legal aid, financial assistance and improved police action. A few countries report on some long-term preventive measures such as legislative reforms and efforts to change attitudes by community education.

365. Two developing countries mention the introduction of heavier penalties for domestic violence. Legislation on rape is reported as varying from rape not considered to be a crime to it being a penal offence carrying a penalty of up to 20 years. Two other developing countries mention the successful establishment of police stations, staffed and run by women, to deal with violence against women. A few other countries mention access to shelters, legal aid centres and counselling centres for abused women. These resources are often established by non-governmental organizations, some of which receive official support.

366. Other measures mentioned by developing countries are primarily information campaigns, development of audio-visual educational materials, television programmes, workshops etc. to increase public awareness of violence against women. A few countries have also started training programmes for community health workers, police and others who come into contact with abused women. One country reports on official encouragement to report cases of abuse; another country states that it is going to encourage the organization of women's interest groups.

367. Eleven developed countries report on measures taken to reduce the incidence and to mitigate the consequences of family violence. Several of these countries report on increased governmental attention and support to abused women. A few countries stress that emphasis is being placed more on the difficult and vulnerable position of the victims of violence. Some countries mention governmental support to ensure that the criminal trial and sentencing process is responsive to the needs of the victims. Criminal procedures have been changed to ease the burden on the victim when a sexual assault case goes to court. The most common support measures mentioned are the provision of shelters, professional and financial assistance, crisis centres, help to fund re-employment, seminars and the use of mass media to increase the awareness of the problem, and training of police on the dynamics of domestic violence.

368. A few countries mention the development of counselling centres for men with problems of violent behaviour.

369. Also, a number of non-governmental organizations are concerned about the increase of violent behaviour in society and in the family, especially violence against women and elderly women.

D. Women under specific conflict situations

370. The Strategies note the importance of the issues of women and children under apartheid (E/CN.6/1990/9), of Palestinian women and children (E/CN.6/1990/10), and of women in areas affected by armed conflicts, foreign intervention and threats to peace (E/CN.6/1990/4). Separate reports on each of these issues are before the Commission.

E. Obstacles to the participation of women in peace

371. The 1989 World Survey states that military expenditure continues to be one of the few growth areas in the world economy, and this expansion is not confined to the richer States. Figures assembled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) show that the world continues to devote a large share of its resources to the development and preservation of military force. The 1989 World Survey also presents figures showing the imbalance of allocation of resources: every two days, hunger and related causes kill as many people as the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, and every year, 7 million children are killed by diseases that are preventable or curable.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has estimated that it would cost $US 300 million a year to immunize all unprotected children by 1990. This is less than the world spent on military purposes every three hours of 1988.

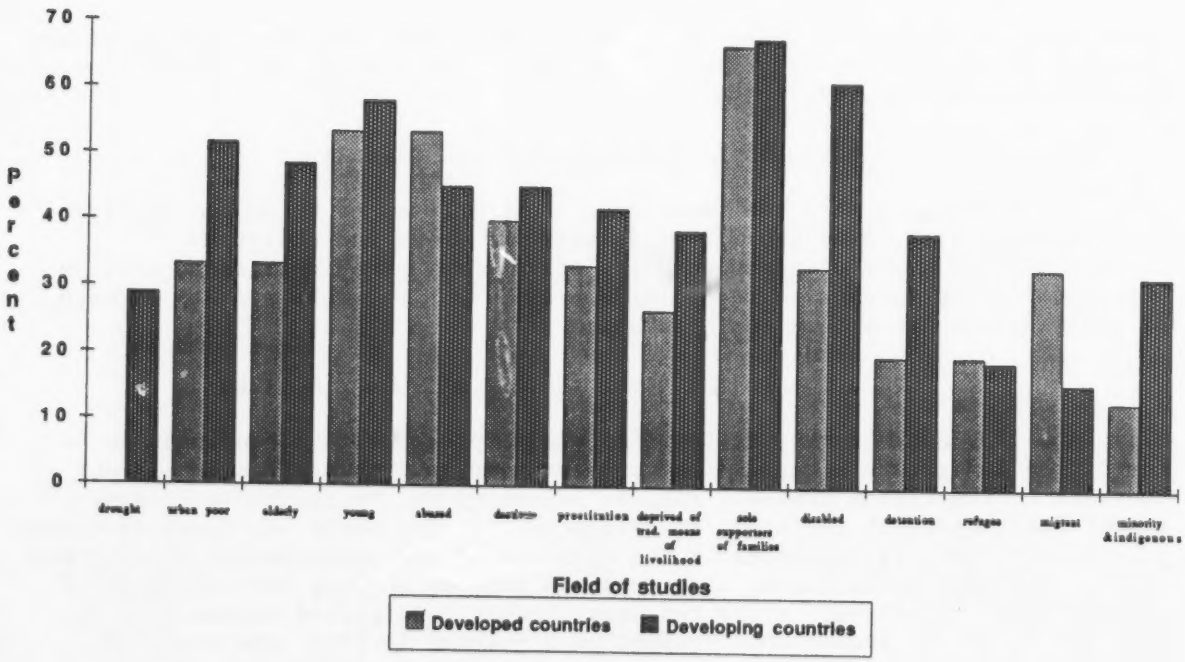
372. One developing country believes that the greatest obstacle to the progress of women and their participation in development is the armed conflicts or other action seeking to destroy national cultures. Another country mentions the problems of the low level of education and insufficient tools in communications.

373. Two developing countries regret that there has been so little participation in international efforts for peace due to the economic crisis.

VII. AREAS OF SPECIAL CONCERN

374. The Nairobi Conference identified 14 areas of special concern. Some of these correspond to particular groups, such as disabled or indigenous women; others correspond to women caught up in events, such as refugee or migrant women. Most of these groups have in common a condition of vulnerability. Part I of the review and appraisal questionnaire, which 32 developing countries and 13 developed countries returned, reveals that in the areas of special concern about two thirds or more of the developing countries report that the Forward-looking Strategies have been implemented and priority has been given to sole-supporters of families, disabled women and young women; followed by urban poor women, elderly women, abused women and destitute women (see figure VIII).

Figure VIII. Areas of special concern: Distribution of countries reporting on the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies



375. Of the developed countries, more than half report that the Forward-looking Strategies have been implemented and that priority has been given to sole supporters of households, young women and abused women.

A. Women as supporters of households

376. Almost half of the developing countries that returned Part II of the questionnaire report on measures taken to improve the conditions for families with children. Several of the developing countries mention especially their concern for the often adverse social situation of the single-parent families, which mostly are female-headed. A few indicate that the number of sole-supported households are increasing steadily. Two countries report up to 40 per cent of households are headed by women. These countries, however, do not report having taken any specific measures for helping these women.

377. Some non-governmental organizations addressed the problems of the increased number of single-parent families and the lack of child-care facilities that have left many women unable to seek regular or full-time employment. This has often led single-parent families living below the poverty line.

378. Several developing countries mention measures taken to improve the health of pregnant women, mothers and children. Other measures mentioned are the provision of allowances to children suffering from family disintegration, or aid such as day-care to ease the double burden of working women. A few countries mention measures such as agricultural programmes, skill training programmes and other employment generating activities for divorced women and widows.

379. A few countries have established special programmes targeting adolescent mothers in order to improve their social situation.

B. Elderly women

380. In addition to material provided for the review and appraisal of the Strategies, information is also available from the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the international plan of aging (E/1989/13).

381. Slightly over half of the countries answering the questionnaire deal with the problems of aging women. The answers are similar for all regions; there is no difference between developed and developing countries. A third of the countries expressing concern about elderly women state that it is a priority, but do not indicate any action; two thirds are implementing the Strategies, even if in some cases aging is not a priority.

382. Very little information is provided on obstacles found or measures taken. Several developing countries reaffirm their concern, and several others state the intention of setting up old people's homes, that pensions exist and, in one case, efforts have been made to enable elderly women to earn an income and to lead a productive old age by making handicrafts. Many developed countries emphasize income and social security. Measures taken range from the appointment of a minister to work for the elderly in special homes and rent subsidies to the extension of provision of pension rights to poor women over 65 and lower retirement age. Most of these measures are not gender specific. Besides economic obstacles, others were identified such as the problem of abuse in all forms, and loneliness.

383. The questionnaire for the review of the international plan on aging contained two specific questions on women, and the answers were generally provided by the national focal points on aging.

384. The first question was on the effect on elderly women of the change in the status of women. Slightly over half of the answers in both developing and developed countries indicate that there was no effect. Of the countries indicating positive effect, most cited the need for women to work as the cause for the inability or incapacity to assist the elderly. The economic crisis was thus evoked, but it was acknowledged that even with less time women were still the main group of care takers. One developed country mentions as an obstacle the unwillingness of the elderly to live with their children.

385. The second question regarded any special measures taken by Governments to assist elderly women, widows in particular. Over two thirds of the answers indicate no special measures. Of those who state that measures have been taken, most do not give specific information. The measures in developing countries centre on pensions and social assistance for widows, particularly civil servants or war widows. In the developed countries, besides widows' benefits, retirement age is sometimes earlier for women; this is being repealed by one country. Elderly mothers of large families receive support in some cases, as do war widows.

386. The information from the review of the international plan on aging (E/1989/13) reveals that very few countries have taken significant specific measures to help elderly women. This is consistent with the answers of the Nairobi review and appraisal.

387. Several countries express their concern for the health and social status of older women, widows and divorced women. A few countries have introduced pension schemes, and some countries are establishing special homes for the elderly. One developing country has established special agricultural programmes with focus on widows, divorced, disabled and landless women. Another developing country has undertaken projects for helping elderly women to improve their economic situation by marketing handicraft products.

388. Two non-governmental organizations mention conferences and seminars held to create awareness of the problems of older women. Violence against older women in families and in institutions in both developed and developing countries is said to be growing.

C. Women victims of trafficking and involuntary prostitution

389. Several developing countries report on measures taken to improve the social situation of women victims of prostitution or of trafficking in women. The measures mentioned are amendments of legislation to provide for stricter penalties and programmes to alleviate poverty; the latter measures include the provision of health care, education, employment training and legal protection.

390. A few of the developed countries mention action that has been taken to help women to escape from prostitution. One country mentions that it has taken steps to ratify the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (General Assembly resolution 317 (IV) of 2 December 1949).

D. Young women

391. Several developing countries express concern about young women. One country mentions the provision of skill-training programmes; another country mentions the provision of low-cost housing programmes; and a third country mentions encouraging women to engage in sports and art.

392. Several developed countries mention measures taken to improve the situation of young women. One country mentions the establishment of an Office of Youth Affairs to give the youth a voice in government policy-making. A few countries stress the need to achieve equality between boys and girls by trying to break sex segregation in schools and sports participation. Other measures mentioned are special programmes to assist teenage parents by the provision of financial aid and encouragement for further education.

393. Non-governmental organizations report on co-operation with the specialized agencies of the United Nations in setting up a hostel for teenage mothers to provide information on child and family social welfare policies, and training in income-generating activities. Young women have been involved in service projects, fund-raising and leadership-training programmes.

E. Urban poor women

394. Several developing countries mention concern for poor women. A few countries mention measures taken to create employment for these women. Some others mention improved social welfare provisions, including low-cost housing to low-income people, and food assistance. One country mentions the improvement of urban planning.

395. A few developed countries mention that some general measures have been taken to improve social welfare policies in order to better meet the needs of poor people. One country mentions special support measures to long-term unemployed women.

F. Women with physical and mental disabilities

396. Several developing countries report on having established, or being in the stage of planning, rehabilitation and training centres to improve the situation of disabled women: physically or socially handicapped, mentally distressed and destitute. Two developing countries mention also the provision of financial assistance.

397. A few of the developed countries mention improvement of the situation of physically or mentally disabled women. Some countries seem to have a broader definition of criteria for classifying disability, which may be why the disabled gain more attention in these countries than in other countries. One country mentions the appointment of a minister responsible for the status of disabled persons. Other more common measures focus on rehabilitation and training for employment. One country mentions support also to non-governmental organizations working for disabled people.

G. Women in detention

398. A few developing countries mention concern for improving the situation of women in prisons. One country stresses the need for preventive measures.

399. Also, several developed countries mention the need to improve the conditions of women in prisons. Some special measures have been taken in the fields of health, maternity, training and counselling.

H. Refugee and migrant women

400. A few developing countries mention their concern for refugee women and children. Two countries report on measures such as the provision of social services, shelters and rehabilitation.

401. Several developed countries mention measures taken to improve the vulnerable situation of many migrant women. One country stresses the implementation of the policy to provide equal opportunities in all fields of economic and social life for migrants with native citizens. Migrants have the same access to social security, education, legal and social rights; children of immigrants have the right to receive supportive instruction in their mother tongue. Other special measures to strengthen the position of immigrant women are the promotion of migrant organizations through funding and research projects.

I. Minority and indigenous women

402. One developing country mentions measures taken to develop the potential of minority cultural communities by strengthening their organizations, training programmes, financial assistance for self-employment and training in social communication skills, and by the provision of maternal and child care.

403. Several developed countries report special concern for native women. One country mentions the publications on indigenous women in the economy for development of future policies. Two other countries stress measures to ensure full legal and political rights for aboriginal women. One country has a law requiring participation of native representatives in any changes to constitutional provisions relating to aboriginal people. A working group on native women and economic development has also been established, and special fundings are provided for the education and training of natives.

J. Women deprived of their traditional livelihood, destitute women and women affected by drought

404. One developing country mentions agricultural programmes for landless and destitute women. A few other developing countries mention provision for the training of rural women to achieve self-sufficiency and for emergency relief measures. Measures taken in these areas of concern are reported only from a few countries.

405. A few developed countries mention some general measures taken to improve the living conditions of women belonging to these groups. Some mention their activities in development programmes in the developing countries.

VIII. NATIONAL MACHINERY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

406. Although national machinery was not discussed in the Forward-looking Strategies under a specific section or chapter, a number of paragraphs in the Strategies were devoted to it. It should however be noted that the question of national machinery received less attention at the Nairobi Conference than at the previous women's world conferences. The Commission on the Status of

Women identified the issue as one of the first priority themes for consideration at its thirty-third session under the rubric of equality, and the issue will be discussed again in 1991 under the rubric of development. Furthermore the Economic and Social Council requested in its resolution 1988/22 establishing the review and appraisal system that the issue of national machinery was of sufficient importance to be treated specifically in the questionnaire. The information in this chapter is based on the answers to the questionnaire and the reports of CEDAW, supplemented by information derived from a seminar organized by the Secretariat on the issue in September 1987 and on the subsequent debate at the Commission.

A. Trends

407. In the Directory presented to the Commission in 1989, detailed information on 91 units of national machinery was presented and the existence of another 37 noted. This means that between 55 and 75 per cent of all countries have designated a national machinery. To a large extent, the difference between the two figures can be attributed to national machinery that is non-governmental rather than governmental and that does not play an active role internationally (see table 8); the signatories of the Convention and countries answering the review and appraisal questionnaire correspond largely to the core group of 91 units of machinery listed in the Directory.

Table 8. Correlation between the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the existence of national machinery

	Convention		
	Ratified by 8 August 1989	Not yet ratified	Total
National nachinery exists	70	22	92
No national Machinery	29	49	78
Total	99	71	170

B. Measures to implement the Forward-looking Strategies

408. Despite the present count, a significant number of countries do not have a national machinery. While most countries consider that the implementation of the Strategies requires an effective national machinery, some countries might face difficulties in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies due to the lack of one. Many of the small island countries, for example, do not have a national machinery. It is possible that specific designs are necessary, and many could benefit from some assistance in this area.

409. More important than numbers is the trend for Governments to upgrade or supplement the initial forms given the national machinery. Several units have become centrally organized and strategically located in order to have authority and to co-ordinate the various implementing bodies, and to process the essential information enabling it to be effective. Although the Mexico Plan of Action recommended that national machinery should be created as a transitional measure, 33/ it appears to be maturing and taking on more permanent features, irrespective of the type of country, and is related to the accumulation of experience and political commitment.

410. Measures can be distinguished concerning the creation or strengthening of national machinery and its activities and role.

1. The recent strengthening of national machinery

411. Several countries have created a national machinery since the Nairobi World Conference. Countries in which national machinery existed before 1985 have frequently taken measures to make it more effective by giving it higher status within the governmental system, often by up-grading its rank or that of its head (e.g. to ministerial rank). Giving power and authority to the national machinery to deal with women's issues at an inter-ministerial level by creating inter-ministerial working groups and establishing plans of action for all levels of implementation is another method of giving the authority to national machinery to integrate women's issues into sectoral plans and programmes to study the impact of budgets on women and to integrate women's concerns into budgets. In some cases, Governments directly increase the financial resources of their national machinery or provide it with budgetary autonomy.

412. In many countries, national machinery has evolved from relatively simple to more complex organizations. This has occurred in countries with different political systems and at different levels of development. National machinery often started in a specific ministry, such as social welfare, or as a non-governmental organization. There has often been both a horizontal and a vertical expansion; some countries set up special units in all relevant ministries, provide them with senior advisers or ensure that the sub-national levels in federal systems also have their equivalent to the national level machinery. In addition to spreading the goals of the work of national machinery for women to the sectors of government, national machinery establishes working relationships with non-governmental organizations and various public or private institutions that can be important, either in implementation or in advisory or information functions. Such changes are often accompanied by a period of training or study of organizational issues and of change in function, in particular a shift from direct implementation to policy-making, co-ordination and monitoring.

2. Functions and activities of national machinery

413. National machinery often began implementing the Forward-looking Strategies by disseminating them. In many countries, the national machinery adapted the Strategies to the national situation, often through a consultative process involving many types of organization at different levels, including grass-root levels. Some countries specifically attempted to set targets for implementation, others emphasized a comprehensive approach. An outgrowth of these efforts by many countries has been to establish specific long-term national plans for the advancement of women. It should be noted that developing countries, rather than dispersing their resources, prefer to concentrate their efforts on specific areas such as social participation, education and information, technical training and education for rural women, maternity education

schemes, lobbying for minorities and health issues. There is also a focus on conditions for women's participation, with assistance for household tasks or, at a more general level, identifying women's needs and mobilizing women.

414. An area in which national machinery has generally taken action is that of introducing legal changes to eliminate discrimination in existing laws and in systematically checking laws for built-in discrimination. In many cases, this has a big impact on key issues such as marriage or inheritance. In other cases, the focus is placed more on employment questions such as recruitment (job advertising) and equal pay. In some developing countries, national machinery organizes legal literacy courses to encourage women to exercise their rights.

415. A clearly emerging area for concern for national machinery, once de jure discrimination is eliminated, is to introduce de facto equality. This is related to the importance given to the monitoring role of the machinery and can take many forms, ranging from continuing verification of implementation of policies and laws, to sanctioning illegal practices by fines, introducing accountability of responsible persons, setting up specialized recourses (e.g. Ombudsman) and co-ordinating with the media to spread information.

416. Finally, national machinery generally plays a vital role in co-ordination of efforts to improve women's status and in advising the Government and authorities. This is done directly, for example, by co-ordinating a long-term plan of action, or indirectly with the assistance of advisory councils or commissions, which can promote awareness, support the machinery or propose research.

C. Obstacles to the effectiveness of national machinery

417. Obstacles to the effectiveness of national machinery can be of internal origin or derive from problems encountered in the environment in which the machinery acts. As in the case of measures, there does not seem to be a significant difference between developed and developing countries in the types of obstacle identified.

1. Internal obstacles

418. Lack of resources is identified by very few countries as a problem for national machinery. This can possibly be explained by the fact that national machinery still has modest expectations or perceives an ability to achieve results with modest resources.

419. The most important obstacles identified concern problems of structure and management. The staff of some machinery has difficulties in the methodology of integrating the concept of the advancement of women into the mainstream of development. As reported by one country, it is a more crucial question than the lack of authority, since lack of understanding of the role of women can play in overall development leads to ineffectiveness: sectoral ministries misunderstand what is expected of them or they tend to neglect the provisions they are supposed to implement. Related to these problems is the weakness of focal points established in sectoral ministries or at lower levels, due not only to lack of status, as in some cases, but also to their insufficient training in how to integrate programmes. Moreover, sectoral ministries can have different priorities than those of the national machinery, and the governmental bureaucracy often lacks consciousness of women's issues. Most of the obstacles identified are mentioned by national machinery with complex structures, and are thus related to basic management functions.

2. External obstacles

420. In a few cases, external obstacles are interpreted in a broad sense, such as the economic crisis that is perceived as making it very difficult for national machinery to be effective, especially in favour of vulnerable groups.

421. Many countries highlight the negative environment in which machinery has to function, which involves a lack of political commitment but more often the traditional attitudes and roles of both men and women, which can translate itself, for example, into preference being given to the education of boys rather than girls. The gap between de jure and de facto equality is frequently identified as a major obstacle. Related obstacles are also identified, such as the insufficiency of existing laws, the time lag between the adoption of legislation and its implementation, and the ignorance of women of their own rights. Some countries underline the fact that some of these problems are more difficult to solve because of the scarcity of women in high decision-making posts.

D. Present priorities

422. In May 1989, a one-page questionnaire was sent to all the national machinery listed in the Directory presented to the Commission in order to identify those priority issues on which they were presently concentrating. The questionnaire to the national machinery focuses only on the main area of concern of national machinery in mid-1989, in contrast to the questionnaire on the review and appraisal, which attempted to cover all the Forward-looking Strategies. By 15 September 1989, 49 responses had been received and a clear picture had emerged of current concerns.

423. No major differences could be noted between the developed and developing countries. Developing countries are more interested in development issues and developed countries in equality, but most of the interest concentrates on these two themes, followed closely by the areas of special concern.

424. Under the theme "equality" there is consensus between developed and developing countries on two issues: achieving equality in political participation and eliminating stereotypes. There is therefore much interest in the cultural dimensions of inequality that appear to be the main component of de facto inequality.

425. Under the theme of "development", machinery in developed and developing countries alike express concern with employment. Developed countries focus mostly on job segregation and inequalities in pay, and developing countries on rural women and food as well as on income generation. The role of education is considered very important, particularly the acquisition of skills that is often perceived as job oriented. Health and motherhood are also areas of concern, particularly in the developing countries. Other issues that emerge as being of priority concern are the double burden of women (in particular the problems of household work), violence against women (especially in Latin America) and prostitution. Finally, a number of units of national machinery are concerned with planning and programming as well as providing information on women.

PART THREE

REVIEW AND APPRAISAL AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

IX. THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

426. Part three focuses on the efforts of the United Nations system since the Nairobi Conference to integrate the Strategies into its thinking, work programme and activities. The Commission and the General Assembly have received detailed reports on this area; work during the past biennium is presented in the report on monitoring (E/CN.6/1990/7). For purposes of the review and appraisal, major trends and problems encountered are emphasized.

427. The Decade for Women and its three Conferences (Mexico, Copenhagen and Nairobi) resulted in the creation of an unprecedented awareness of women's issues and momentum in this field, both at the national and international levels. Although the emphasis was placed on action, there was also concern for harmonization. For example, the entities of the United Nations system co-operated closely in producing the 1989 World Survey and in the review and appraisal of the Decade, sharing expertise and experience. This was helped by the annual ad hoc inter-agency meeting held immediately after each session of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as preparatory body for the Nairobi Conference. A number of components of the United Nations system had established focal points, and their regular meetings assisted in building an effective network transcending institutional and bureaucratic barriers.

428. The implementation of the Strategies was started immediately after their adoption, in 1985, by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/108. Many intergovernmental bodies issued mandates, requesting reports on action and monitoring: the Commission, the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, the regional commissions and the governing bodies of the various agencies. In addition, a number of units in the various components of the system were active in conducting research, training, publications, reporting and technical co-operation.

429. Following the adoption of the Strategies, there was wide concern that the issue of women could be forgotten or reduced in priority in favour of new ones. The Commission played a crucial role in ensuring that not only the progress made was not lost, but also that it would become irreversible. The Commission took a vigorous and determined lead in maintaining the momentum and in overseeing the incorporation of the Strategies throughout the United Nations system. The strengthening of the Commission, due largely to its own dynamism, deserves to be recalled. In a time of financial crisis, the Commission succeeded in having its sessions held on an annual rather than a biennial basis (Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/21), and began focusing its discussions on more substantive and technical issues through a balanced selection of priority themes in the areas of equality, development and peace, selected several years in advance in order to allow adequate planning and preparation of its work. Finally, the Council decided by resolution 1989/45 on the enlargement of the membership of the Commission from 32 to 45.

A. An overall view of the activities of the United Nations system

430. The activities of the system during the period 1988-1989 have already been described in the cross-organizational programme analysis of activities for the advancement of women presented to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in 1989 (E/1989/19). One indicator of the output of these activities can be found in information in the Women's Information System (WIS) as,

except for technical co-operation, most of the activities appear in the form of either meetings or documents. An examination of the number of meetings organized and documents produced since 1986 provides an indication of the volume, the issues and countries that have been of concern to the United Nations system.

1. Meetings

431. Output under the heading of meetings include intergovernmental meetings such as the sessions of the Commission, seminars, expert groups and inter-agency meetings. Between January 1986 and December 1989, the United Nations system is estimated to have held roughly 380 meetings on the subject of women, an average of nearly a hundred a year. There are some annual fluctuations that can be linked to work programme cycles.

432. In terms of region covered, opposed to the venue of the meeting, 39 per cent of the meetings on women were not at a regional or country level, but a global or interregional one. Two regions emerge as receiving the most attention: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Africa with 20 and 19 per cent, respectively. Together the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia represent only 18 per cent of the geographical focus of meetings.

433. In terms of subject matter, roughly two thirds of the meetings were held on the three themes of the Decade for Women, but development dominates, followed by equality with less than 20 per cent. The theme of peace represents less than 1 per cent of the meetings held. Meetings of a general nature represent 22 per cent of the total, and meetings on technical co-operation about 13 per cent.

2. Documents produced by the United Nations system

434. Documents on women have been catalogued for the period from the Nairobi Conferences 1985 to 31 May 1989. During that period, WIS has collected 1,450 documents produced throughout the United Nations system on the subject of women. At the most, 5-10 per cent of documents produced by the United Nations system are estimated to have not been catalogued.

435. Not all documents have a geographical coverage or emphasis. However, whenever a document provides sufficient information on one or several countries, it is registered and the distribution by country or region shows the emphasis placed by the United Nations system on certain regions or countries. If there is a geographical imbalance, it could affect the conclusions of a global nature.

436. The distribution by region shows that three regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Europe) each represent approximately 25 per cent of the references to specific countries; Latin America and the Caribbean and the Western Asia region have a much lower share: 16 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. These figures reflect the emphasis placed by the United Nations system on the different regions and influences the image projected of the regions. If a category of industrialized market economies is used, together they represent 30 per cent of the references.

437. Differences in the frequencies of country references within regions are more pronounced than those between the regions. A few countries in each region constitute the bulk of the references: between 1 and 4 countries account for

25 per cent of the references in each region, so that 14 countries, less than 10 per cent of the total, represent a quarter of all references. In Asia and the Pacific, two thirds of the countries represent only a fifth of the references. In each region, the countries with a low reference frequency tend to be the smaller and less developed ones. Island countries, with a few exceptions, appear very infrequently in United Nations documents on women.

438. Since a document can cover different subjects, multiple descriptors of the contents are used. Taking a broad subject area, development clearly dominates the documentation produced by the system on women. Equality also receives considerable attention. Peace is represented significantly less than the first two themes, largely because most of the United Nations system is composed of development-oriented specialized agencies.

439. Under the theme of development, education is the subject most covered (over 250 references). The two other subthemes of the Decade for Women: employment and health, are much less frequent, as is food, including agriculture, rural development and water, which are in the 140-160 range of references. Topics having between 20 and 240 references include social services, housing (settlements and transport), industry and energy. Science and technology, environment and communications are all below 20 references.

440. The areas of special concern do not receive much attention since they are each below the level of 40 references: the areas of violence, destitution, prostitution and migration are between 20 and 40 references. All the other areas are below that level, for example, the special groups (youth, elderly, disabled, refugee, indigenous women).

B. Technical co-operation and research

441. Since the Nairobi World Conference, a concerted effort has been made to improve the capacity of the United Nations system to deliver technical co-operation for the benefit of women, both by incorporating it in mainstream activities and developing approaches to deal directly with women's concerns. This has included the development of guidelines for the incorporation of women's concerns by most of the operational agencies and institutions of staff training, as called for by the Strategies. Details are given in the biennial monitoring report, also before the Commission (E/CN.6/1990/7).

442. While the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) is mandated to promote research for women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was established by the General Assembly as the only multilateral technical co-operation fund directed specifically to women. The main areas of activities of these two United Nations entities since the Nairobi World Conference are important to examine because of their impact and catalytic role with respect to the United Nations system.

1. United Nations Development Fund for Women

443. UNIFEM is mandated to finance innovative and experimental activities directly benefiting women, in line with national and regional priorities; and to serve as a catalyst in attracting additional and specialized resources for women. It intervenes in priority sectors where it can make critical contributions to women and development by providing access to improved technologies, training and credit, and by encouraging an economic and social environment within which its efforts would be more effective.

444. The models and approaches developed by UNIFEM through its project-support experiences have contributed to mainstream development thinking and technical co-operation efforts in designing effective and sustainable strategies and programmes involving women as full partners in development. This illustrates the critical value of a special, autonomous fund, working in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

445. During the period 1985-1988, UNIFEM, in its catalytic role, was able to leverage nearly twice its own investments, for example, roughly $US 17 million. In addition to contributions made to the Fund by non-governmental organizations and individuals, the Fund receives its major resources through government pledges made at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities. In 1988, UNIFEM received $US 5.7 million in pledged contributions, which represents a 16 per cent increase over the previous year. This figure is expected to rise for 1989.

2. International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

446. INSTRAW is mandated to set up an integrated multi-disciplinary, methodological approach to women in development to be carried out through a network of co-operative arrangements. Following the Nairobi World Conference, efforts first focused on training to develop innovative methodologies in the preparation of multi-media training packages for women and development. Emphasis was also placed on training in planning and programming techniques for women in development.

447. More recently, in the framework of women and development, priority has been given to the programme on information, documentation and communication, including the publications programme. In this context, networking has become a main pillar of the mode of operation of INSTRAW through co-operative arrangements and cost-sharing within and outside the United Nations system. An example of this approach can be found in the development of a major statistical thrust in the United Nations system to take into account the activities of women in national accounts. Renewed efforts are now being carried out to relate the international and national levels to the grass-roots level, and to set up feed-back mechanisms to improve policies and programmes.

448. Financially, the pledges and contributions to the INSTRAW programme have continued to increase and, in 1989, reached a level of $US 1.2 million.

3. Statistics and indicators

449. One of the far-reaching recommendations in the Strategies concerns the measurement of women's contributions to development in national accounts. An expert group on the issue made several proposals with special reference to the informal sector. These included the following: (a) the promotion of the wider understanding and improved application of principles and recommendations on the coverage of subsistence, small-scale and non-monetary household production, contained in the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA); (b) a review and analysis of the classification of industry, occupation and status in employment, with a view to suggesting ways in which women's concerns might be better taken into account of in the revisions currently being prepared; (c) an analysis, to the extent possible, of income and production flows in SNA by sex, on an experimental basis; and (d) an experimental compilation of supplementary statistics and estimates that would permit the development of augmented estimates of gross domestic product (GDP) in supplementary or satellite accounts,

that is, estimates of GDP that take into account household domestic work and reproduction not currently included in the SNA production boundary.

450. In its discussion of the methodological development of economic accounts on women's contribution to development to supplement SNA, undertaken by the Statistical Office and INSTRAW, the Statistical Commission agreed that a technical report on methods of compilation, valuation and analysis in that field would be of great value to countries. The technical report should be aimed at assisting countries interested in developing their own statistics in that field and, ultimately, at providing national planners with a complete picture of production in the informal and household sectors, and of important activities in households outside the production boundary. The Commission has stressed the need to improve understanding of women's roles in the economy, to rectify inequities in women's economic situation and to provide a more accurate and comprehensive basis for social and economic planning.

451. The Statistical Office and INSTRAW are preparing the first draft of the report for mid-1990. It will draw extensively on existing work and on case studies of statistics on women in the informal sector and in development undertaken by INSTRAW and the Statistical Office in approximately 12 developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, with support from UNDP and the Government of the Netherlands, and will take into account the conclusions of the expert group meetings on the revision of SNA and its harmonization with the System of Material Product Balances, held in 1989.

C. Institutional co-ordination

452. The organizations of the United Nations system have taken a number of steps to implement that part of the Forward-looking Strategies concerned with institutional co-ordination. In programmatic terms, the organizations of the system formulated and the Administrate Committee on Co-ordination proposed a system-wide medium-term plan for women and development for the period 1990-1991. The Economic and Social Council agreed to the plan in its resolution 1987/86. The plan will constitute the framework for the system-wide implementation of the Strategies. It has been considered so useful as a co-ordination device that the Council has already decided that a new plan should be formulated to cover the period 1996-2001 for all aspects of the advancement of women.

453. The first progress report on the implementation of the system-wide plan was presented to the Economic and Social Council, through the Commission on the Status of Women, in 1989. This showed that most of the organizations of the system had incorporated the provisions of the plan into their individual medium-term plans and programming documents. Furthermore, the basis for monitoring implementation was set through the preparation of a cross-organizational programme analysis on the advancement of women that was presented to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in 1989. That programme analysed the level of activity concerned with the advancement of women during the period 1988-1989, the biennium previous to the period in which the system-wide plan will come into effect and will constitute a baseline against which implementation can be measured.

454. At the intersecretariat level, a number of mechanisms have been set up to ensure co-ordinated action and to encourage joint work. The Division for the Advancement of Women continues to be the focal point of the United Nations system for the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. At the centre of the process is the inter-agency meetings on women that take place immediately following the annual sessions of the Commission. These meetings, for

which the Division for the Advancement of Women is the secretariat, plan to co-operate in the preparation of reports for the Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. In practice, all of the substantive reports presented to the central legislative bodies include substantive contributions from the relevant organizations of the United Nations system. Some, like the 1989 World Survey are joint products. The meetings also provide an opportunity for substantive discussion of issues, for the monitoring of the system-wide medium-term plan and the work of other subsidiary bodies of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in terms of the advancement of women, each of which has been requested to deal with the issue in their specialized contexts. It has also taken the lead in developing joint approaches to operational activities for women and development.

455. In addition, the operational agencies of the system, through the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, which comprises UNDP, UNICEF, WFP and UNFPA, have undertaken activities, including the training of staff, to harmonize approaches towards women and development. At its second regular session in 1989, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, in its decision 1989/28 of 30 October 1989, concluded that:

> "The organizations of the United Nations system, in this review and appraisal year, recommit themselves to full implementation of their responsibilities under the Strategies: in programmes, in policies, in institutional arrangements and in personnel practices. They will take the steps necessary to ensure that, when the next review and appraisal takes place in 1995, the hopes invested in the United Nations system will have increasingly been realized." (ACC/1989/DEC/24-32, p. 6)

456. The network of focal points set up during the Decade has been continued. A directory of the focal points is updated and published on a biennial basis. The organizations of the United Nations system use this network. In many of the organizations, the focal point is a unit especially set up to deal with women's questions; in others, it is a specially appointed co-ordinator.

457. In addition, a number of organizations have set up regional and sectoral information systems on women that collect and exchange publications and reports. Among the more elaborated systems is the Women's Information System (WINAP) maintained by ESCAP. At the global level, the Division for the Advancement of Women maintains the Women's Information System that has catalogued all United Nations system publications and reports since the Nairobi Conference. It has also collaborated with the Statistical Office and INSTRAW to establish a data bank on women (WISTAT). A common feature of both these systems is that they are conceived for personal computers, which enables networking both inside the United Nations system and the national machinery in different countries.

D. Women in the United Nations system

458. The Strategies called on the United Nations system to take all necessary measures to achieve an equitable balance between women and men staff members at managerial levels in all substantive areas, as well as in field posts. 34/ Progress in this area has been regularly reported to the General Assembly.

459. Long-term progress can be assessed by comparing the situation in 1984, prior to the Nairobi Conference, with that in 1988, the latest year for which data are available. A distinction is made by type of United Nations entity: the Secretariat of the United Nations, voluntary funds such as UNFPA and UNICEF, the specialized agencies such as ILO, FAO, WHO and others such as the

International Court of Justice and the United Nations University. Four levels are compared: entry levels (P1-P2), middle Professionals (P3-P4), middle management (P5-D1) and senior management (D2 and above). The results are shown in tables 9 and 10.

Table 9. The distribution of women by United Nations entity and level in 1984 and 1988
(Percentage)

Entity	Senior management	Middle management	Middle professional	Entry level	Total
	1984				
United Nations Secretariat	3.3	7.4	25.7	32.9	20.3
United Nations voluntary funds	4.0	7.3	23.1	37.2	22.9
Specialized agencies	1.2	3.7	16.9	35.2	3.9
Other	0.0	1.3	17.7	44.4	13.1
Total	2.5	5.0	20.5	35.1	17.2
	1988				
United Nations Secretariat	4.5	10.3	30.2	37.5	24.5
United Nations Voluntary funds	6.5	12.9	28.6	40.1	28.7
Specialized agencies	2.7	4.8	20.1	36.3	16.3
Other	0.0	2.9	18.9	56.5	15.1
Total	4.0	7.2	24.6	38.1	20.8

Table 10. Changes between 1984 and 1988 by level and type of United Nations entity
(Percentage points)

Entity	Senior management	Middle management	Middle professional	Entry level	Total
United Nations Secretariat	1.2	3.0	4.5	4.5	4.2
United Nations voluntary funds	2.5	5.7	5.5	2.9	5.7
Specialized agencies	1.5	1.1	3.2	1.1	2.4
Other	0.0	1.7	1.2	12.1	2.0
Total	1.5	2.1	4.1	3.0	3.6

460. In the four years under review, the total increase in the representation of women has been 3.6 percentage points, which corresponds to an overall increase to 21 per cent of Professional staff. The leading group has been the voluntary funds with an increase of 5.7 percentage points, which represents a 25 per cent increase, followed by the Secretariat with an increase of 4.2 points, representing a 20 per cent increase. At the entry level, the targets set by the General Assembly have been reached or are not far from being reached. However, equality is far from being reached at the middle and senior management levels.

461. It should be noted that this period was characterized by financial crisis and post reduction for many of the organizations, and that most have adopted affirmative action policies and targets.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10).

2/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.IV.2.

3/ Ibid., p. 6.

4/ Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family with Special Emphasis on its Effects on Women, Vienna, 8-12 December 1986, p. 5.

5/ Directory of National Machinery.

6/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements ..., para. 163.

7/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.88.II.E.1.

8/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/43/38), para. 770.

9/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements ..., para. 72.

10/ Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Report III (Part 4B), International Labour Conference, 72nd, 73rd, 75th and 76th sessions, Geneva.

11/ Report of the Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, International Labour Conference, 72nd session, Geneva, 1986, provisional summary record 31/15.

12/ Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Report III (Part 4A), International Labour Conference, 72nd, 73rd, 75th and 76th sessions, Geneva.

13/ International Labour Organisation, Official Bulletin, vol. LXVII, 1984, Series A, No. 1, p. 10 (French version).

14/ General Survey by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Report III (Part 4B), International Labour Conference, 72nd session, Geneva, 1986.

15/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.IV.3.

16/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.IV.2, p. 361.

17/ Ibid., p. 54.

18/ Ibid., p. 304.

19/ Ibid., pp. 42 and 43.

20/ Ibid., pp. 43-45.

21/ Ibid., pp. 27-37.

22/ Ibid., pp. 76-77.

23/ Ibid., p. 379.

24/ Ibid., p. 129.

25/ Ibid., pp. 152, 201, 252.

26/ Ibid., p. 145.

27/ Ibid., pp. 167-168.

28/ Ibid., p. 278.

29/ Ibid., pp. 94-97.

30/ Ibid., p. 97.

31/ Ibid., pp. 101-111.

32/ Ibid., p. 382.

33/ Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, 19 June-2 July 1975 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.1), paras. 34-36.

34/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements ..., p. 85.